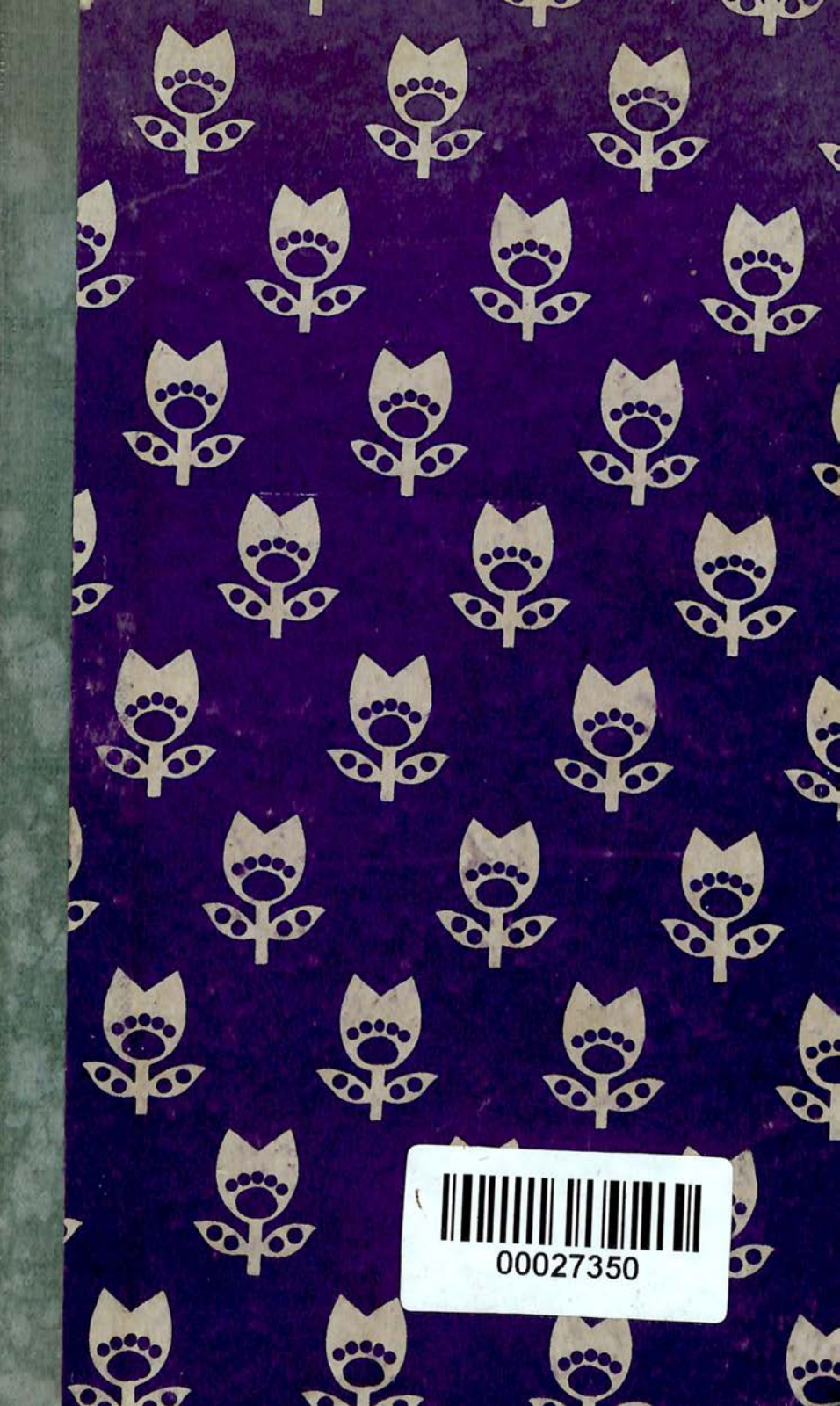
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CONTENTS.

Book the Second.

Chapter I.

From the Re-Assembling of Parliament, on February 3rd, 1831, to the Defeat of the Ministry, on the First Reform Bill in the House of Commons, and Dissolution of Parliament thereon.

PAGE

Lord Grey's intentions set forth 1
Incendiarism in England, stated to be of foreign origin . . 2
Public disturbances 3
Rural outrages 4
Executions for arson 4
Public opinion in England 5
Distress of the people a favourite topic in parliament . . 6
Jealousy of the Tory party 6
State of Ireland 8
Position of Mr. O'Connell 9
He advocates the Repeal of the Union 9
Distress of the Irish commented upon 10, 11
Mr. O'Connell uses the sufferings of the Irish as a means to his own ends 12
Mr. O'Connell and Mr. O'Gorman Mahon 13
Irish agitation 15
Mr. Shiel's emphatic exclamation in favour of Repeal of the Union 15

PAGE
Lord Anglesey re-appointed Viceroy by the Whigs . . . 17
Mr. Stanley Irish Secretary 18
Hostile proceedings of Mr. O'Connell 19
Famine in Ireland 20
Notice of a meeting of trades in Dublin 21
Suppressed by proclamation 22
Mr. O'Connell's 'obedience to the law' 22
His prediction not fulfilled 23
Mr. O'Connell baffled 24
Reform contemplated by ministers 25
The Reform Bill discussed in the Cabinet 26
The king's alarm at the measure 27
Lord Grey's earnestness in the cause of reform 28
Committee appointed by the Cabinet to frame the Reform Bill 29
The committee discuss and settle the provisions of the measure 31
Scheme propounded to the Cabinet 32
Meeting of parliament 33
Ministerial statements 34
Discussed 35
Petitions in favour of reform 36
The Chancellor of the Exchequer's plan for the settlement of the Civil List 37
Prophetic words of Sir Robert Peel 37
The Civil List discussed 39
Lord Althorp's explanation 41
Comments of Sir H. Parnell 42
Embarrassment of the ministry 44
General laudation bestowed upon the King 45
No outfit required by him for the Queen 46
Dangers incurred by the ministry 47
Which they escape 48
The First Whig Budget 49
Financial Statement 50

PAGE
Taxes proposed to be removed 52
And others substituted 53
The latter part of the plan immediately abandoned . . . 54
Mr. Stanley blames the landlords of Ireland 56
Doings of Mr. O'Connell disapproved 57
His system of agitation discussed 58
Mr. O'Connell escapes punishment 59
Opposite politics of the Lord Lieutenant and the Secretary for Ireland 59
Mr. O'Connell's support of the ministry 62
Reform Bill proposed 63
Petitions in favour of Reform 64
Crowded state of the House on the occasion of the ministerial exposition 65
Lord John Russell leader of the ministerial movement . . 66
Remarks upon his qualifications for the post 67
His speech, introducing the Reform Bill 67
Ministerial plans gradually change 73
Nomination boroughs a species of property 74
Disfranchisement proposed by Lord John Russell . . . 75
Right of suffrage 76
Enfranchisement of towns 78
County representation 79
Schedules A and B 80
Plan for Scotland 81
And for Ireland 82
Number of votes expected 83
Intentions of ministers on the subjects of ballot and duration of parliament 84
Lord John Russell's answer to objections 85
His account of the danger to be incurred by refusal to pass the bill 87
The debate on Lord John Russell's motion 88
Sir R. Inglis's reply to Lord John's arguments 90
Prophecies of Sir R. Inglis 93

PAGE
Proved fallacious 94
Sir R. Peel's opposition 95
His painful position 97
Course adopted by him 98
His speech described 99
Defends the existing system 103
And foretels evil 104
Calm tone of his speech, not admired by other opponents of the bill 105
Character of the opposition—Sir Charles Wetherell, Mr. Croker, and Mr. Hunt 106
Effect of the proposed plan out of doors 108
Surprise and pleasure of the public at the extent of the proposed reform 110
Petition of the Glasgow operatives 112
Excitement evinced by the petition 113
Opposition silenced for a time by the presentation of petitions in favour of Reform 114
The Opposition gathers courage by the supposed change of public opinion 115
Lord John Russell's motion for leave to bring in a bill to amend the representation of Scotland and Ireland . . 115
Ordered, after a short debate 116
Reform eagerly demanded by the people 117
Second reading of the Reform Bill moved 118
Majority of one 119
Division equivalent to a defeat 119
Irish Reform Bill 120
The king unwilling to dissolve parliament 121
Intrigues with respect to the dissolution 122
Lord Wharncliffe's motion for papers relative to the measure before the Commons 124
His speech on the motion 125
The speeches of Lord Durham, Lord Plunkett, and the Lord Chancellor 129

PAGE
Difficulties of the administration 130
Hesitation of the king 131
Reform Bill opposed in the Commons 132
Motion of General Gascoigne 133
Debated 134
Division on the motion—defeat of the administration . . 135
Determination of the Opposition to prevent the bringing up of the supplies 136
Motion of adjournment moved 137
Ministers again defeated 138
Proceedings in the Lords 138
The House of Lords and the *Times* 139
The Marquis of Londonderry and Lord Brougham . . . 141
Proceedings in the Lords respecting the *Times* 141
Lord Tenterden's blunder 145
Lord Brougham's triumphant reply 145
Anger of the Opposition Lords 146
The publisher of the *Times* reprimanded and discharged . 147
Ministers induce the king to dissolve the parliament . . 148
Scene with the king 150
Extraordinary scene in the House of Lords 152
Similar scene in the House of Commons 156
Parliament prorogued 158
Parliament dissolved 159
Civil List Act carried on the last day of the session . . . 160

Chapter II.

From the Dissolution of Parliament, April (22nd), to the Defeat of the Second Reform Bill in the House of Lords.

PAGE

Reform Committees organized 161
Parliamentary Candidate Society constituted 161
Whig Plans in favour of the Reform Bill 162
General election 163
Result of the election 165
Majority in favour of ministers 165
Meeting of parliament—Mr. Manners Sutton chosen Speaker 166
The King's speech 167
Debate on the address 169
The Opposition abstain from moving an amendment on the address 170
The dissolution blamed and defended 171
Prosecution of Mr. O'Connell 175
Mr. Stanley's explanation 176
Offence given to Mr. O'Connell 177
Lord John Russell proposes his second edition of the Reform Bill 177
Altered tone manifest in his speech 178, 179
Reform Bills for Scotland and Ireland introduced . . . 180
Second reading of the English Reform Bill 182
Division on the second reading 183
Motion to hear counsel upon the disfranchisement of Appleby 184
Negatived 186
Angry debates in the Commons 187
Adjournment of debate negatived 188
Violent quarrel in the House of Commons 189
People become excited 190

PAGE
Mr. C. Wynn's motion to postpone schedules 191
Sir R. Peel supports it 191
Reply of Lord John Russell 192
Motion negatived 193
Committee on the bill 194
Sir R. Peel's opposition 195
Lord Chandos's amendment carried 196
Proposal by Mr. Hume defeated 197
Mr. Hunt's proposal received with a direct negative. . . 198
Lord Chandos's clause regarded with great disfavour. . . 198
Reform Bill read a third time in the Commons 199
Division on the question 'That this Bill do pass'. 201
Discussion by the public of the question, 'What will the Lords do?' 202
London illuminated on the occasion of the Reform Bill passing. 203
Bill sent to the House of Lords 204
Debate on the second reading 205
Lord Grey's speech 206
Speeches, the most remarkable, by Lord Dudley, Lord Plunkett, the Lord Chancellor, and Lord Lyndhurst . 209
Lord Dudley's speech. 210
Lords Brougham and Lyndhurst 213
The bill thrown out 215
Lord Ebrington's motion on the subject in the House of Commons 216
Carried 217
The king's wish that ministers should not resign 217
Great public meeting at Birmingham 218
Lord John Russell's letter to the Birmingham Political Union 219
The New Bankrupt Law 220
Parliament prorogued 221

Chapter III.

From the Meeting of Parliament, December 6th, 1831, to the Defeat of Lord Grey in the Lords, on the 7th of May, 1832, and the consequent resignation of the Ministry.

PAGE
Difficulties of the ministry—conflicting opinions 222
Creation of peers suggested by Lord Durham and the Lord Chancellor 223
Opposed by Lord Grey 224
Discussed by the cabinet 225
The king's repugnance to the plan 226
State of the king's mind 227
Lord Wharncliffe's negotiation 228
Suspicions respecting the ministers 229
Violent proceedings out of doors 230
Opening of parliament by the king in person 231
The speech 231
The Bristol riots 232
Sir C. Wetherell throws the responsibility on the Home-office 233
Consequences of the riots 235
Lord John Russell's motion to bring in a bill to amend the representation of England and Wales 235
His speech 236
His explanation of the new bill 238
Its principles 240
Sir Robert Peel's reply 243
Lord Althorp's speech, in explanation 244
Personal recrimination 245
Lord Althorp's motion for second reading of the bill . 246
Mr. Macaulay's attack upon Sir Robert Peel 247
Sir Robert Peel's answer 249

PAGE
His defence of his conduct 251
The second reading carried 254
Bill considered in committee 255
Mr. Shiel's proposition 256
The Chancellor of the Exchequer's reply 256
The Opposition hope to embarrass the ministry 257
The third reading carried 258
Public attention again fixed on the Lords 258
Bill sent to the House of Lords 259
Intrigues respecting the Bill 260
Lords Wharncliffe and Harrowby's qualified support of it . 261
The Duke of Buckingham's notice of motion 262
His letter to the king 262
His advances to the Lord Chancellor 264
Lord Grey's speech, described 265
His account of the mischiefs that would result from delay . 266
Lord Ellenborough's motion 'that the bill be read that day six months' 267
His opposition to the bill 269
The late Mr. Canning's supporters attacked 270
Lord Melbourne's explanation 271
Lord Haddington's reasons for supporting the bill . . . 272
Change in the opinions of Opposition peers 274
Its cause 275
Lord Grey's reply to the arguments against the bill . . . 276
Second reading carried in the Lords 276
The Duke of Wellington's elaborate protest against the bill 276
House resolves itself into committee 276
Lord Grey's motion on Schedule A 277
Lord Lyndhurst's motion for postponement 277
Resisted by Lord Grey 278
Lord Grey's speech, described 279
Defeat of the ministers 280
Popular anger and indignation 281
Resignation of the ministry accepted by the king . . . 281

Chapter IV.

From the resignation of the Whig Administration (May 9th, 1832), to the passing of the English Reform Bill.

PAGE

Announcement by ministers in both Houses of their resignation 283
The king's consultation with Lord Lyndhurst 284
Attempts to form a new ministry 285
Sir R. Peel's refusal to accept office 286
The Duke of Wellington's willingness 287
Popular indignation 288
Unpopularity of the Royal Family 289
Mr. Hunt's description of it 289
General excitement 290
Violent language employed at meetings 291
Proceedings of public bodies 292
Meeting of the Common Council 292
National political union receives a vast accession to its members 293
Excitement in the provinces 294
The Birmingham petition 295
Meeting at Southwark 296
Mr. W. Brougham's speech 297
Lord Ebrington's motion for an address to the king . . 298
Mr. Baring's inquiry into the cause of the resignation of the ministry 300
Intrigues of the Opposition 303
Mr. Macaulay's speech 304
Alarm of the Whigs 305
The Duke of Wellington's endeavours to organize a cabinet 306
Language of *The Times* upon that subject 307
Majority in favour of Lord Ebrington's motion 308

PAGE
Analysis of the division 309
Difficulty of forming a new ministry 310
Sir Robert Peel's hesitation the chief obstacle 310
Probability of civil war referred to 311
Dilemma of the Whig partisans 312
Motion of Lord Carnarvon to discharge the order of the day for going into committee on the Reform Bill . . . 313
Not authorized by the Duke 314
Scene in the Commons 314
Mr. Alexander Baring's defence of the Duke of Wellington 315
Mr. Duncombe's diatribe against Lord Lyndhurst . . . 316
Speech of Lord John Russell 317
And of Mr. Macaulay 318
Sir R. Inglis's unequivocal declaration 319
Mr. Baring proposes a compromise 320
Its terms 321
The Duke of Wellington's opinion of the debate 323
Sir F. Burdett's attack upon Lord Lyndhurst 324
Lord Grey recalled 325
The conditions of his return not explained 325
Outbreak in the House of Peers 327
Declaration of the peers that their independence was destroyed 329
The Duke of Newcastle's fierce denial of the king's right to create a vast body of peers 329
Lord Wharncliffe's questions 330
Answered by Lord Grey 331
Actual state of affairs 332
Opposition peers secede 333
Cause of their secession 334
Sir Herbert Taylor's letter 334
Results of the secession of the peers 335
Reflections upon the subject 336
Reasons why the opposition of the peers was of no avail . 338
The bill in committee 340

PAGE
Third reading 341
Division on the third reading 342
Bill sent to the Commons 343
Sir Edward Sugden's speech 344
Sir Robert Peel's opinion 346
Lord Milton's justification of his refusal to pay taxes until the passing of the bill 347, 348
Mr. Stanley's answer to Lord Milton's proposition . . . 349
The ministers justified 351
The Lords' amendments adopted 353
Royal assent given to the bill 355

Chapter V.

From the passing of the English Reform Bill, to the end of the Session of 1832.

PAGE
Second reading of the Irish Reform Bill moved by Mr. Stanley 356
Mistaken policy of Mr. Stanley 357
Objections to the bill urged by Mr. O'Connell 361
His proposals rejected 363
The ministry blamed by Sir John Newport 365
The Duke of Wellington's opposition to the bill 367
Supported by Lord Plunkett 368
Passed by the Lords 369
Irish Tithe Bill 369
Exclusion of catholics from the committee on the bill . . 370
Government proposal respecting the Irish tithe 372
The debates which followed, described 374
Mr. Stanley's plan for permanently dealing with the subject of tithe 377
His explanation of it 380

PAGE
Angry discussion which followed 381
The Tithe Bill passed 384
Introduction of the Scottish Reform Bill by the Lord Advocate 385
Its provisions explained 386
Prejudice exhibited in the debates which followed . . . 387
Opposition of Sir R. Peel 388
Defence by the Lord Advocate 390
The Scottish Reform Bill carried in the Commons . . . 393
The property qualification rejected 394
The bill passed by the Lords 396
Financial statement for the year 397
The estimates of 1832-1833 398
Diminution in the revenue 399
Its causes stated 399
Sir R. Peel's opinion 400
The Chancellor of the Exchequer's budget accepted . . . 401
Close of the last session of the old and unreformed parliament 402
The King's speech 402
Review of the session 403
Reflections on the character of the Whigs, as a party . . 405
General remarks . . . . . 406—422

APPENDIX 423

BOOK THE SECOND.

CHAPTER I.

FROM THE RE-ASSEMBLING OF PARLIAMENT ON FEBRUARY 3RD, 1831, TO THE DEFEAT OF THE MINISTRY ON THE FIRST REFORM BILL IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS — AND DISSOLUTION OF PARLIAMENT THEREON.

LORD GREY, when he became the first minister of the Crown, declared his intention to propose certain great reforms in our political institutions, but at the same time unequivocally stated his determination to put down in every part of the kingdom all illegal attempts to bring about any change by violence or terror. 'To relieve the distress,' he said, when giving a general description of his intended policy, 'which now unhappily prevails in some districts of the country, will be the first and most earnest object of our deliberations; and I must declare, and on this point I not only speak for myself, but with the full approbation of all my colleagues, I declare that it is my determined resolution wherever outrages are perpetrated, or excesses committed, to suppress them with vigour. Anxious as I am to relieve the distress of the country, I wish it to be distinctly understood

there will not be on the part of the administration any want of courage to repress the disturbances in which the people of England—no—not the people of England —God forbid that I should bring so groundless a charge against them!—but in which a portion of the people of England in some districts have been deluded to engage."[1] In pursuance of this determination, special commissions were issued, and the judges proceeded immediately into the country to try the offenders who had already been arrested. The whole of the southern counties had for some months been in a state of great disturbance—they had met tumultuously during the day for the purpose of breaking the threshing-machines—and at night had set fire to the ricks of corn in the hopes of terrifying the farmers into giving them higher wages. As fires of this kind had also occurred in France, a cry was immediately raised in England, that what some were pleased to designate the un-English crime of arson, did not originate with the English peasants, but was suggested to them by foreign emissaries, who were intent on creating mischief and misery in England. No such emissary was found—no trace of such a person ever appeared in any of the trials which now took place.

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[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1830, p. 311. On March 28, 1831, Lord Grey declared that at the time he took office, in November, 1830, 'the counties around London were in open insurrection,' and that no measures had been taken by the late government to put down these disturbances.—*Mirror of Parliament*, 1831, p. 1209.

The whole guilt and folly were found to belong to ourselves, and assuredly there was no reason to go abroad in order to find reasons and explanations concerning the whole of these foolish as well as wicked proceedings. The success of the French and Belgian revolutions had excited every class of the English people—and each class manifested its excitement in a way that was precisely in accordance with the degree of its intelligence. The middle classes both in town and country met in public meetings, talked much good sense, and much nonsense — passed resolutions, and determined to obtain for themselves the reforms or changes in their institutions which they believed necessary for good government. There was naturally constant allusion to France, and to the success, the glorious success as it was universally termed, of the French, who had risen in armed rebellion against the King of France and his army. That such constant allusions to armed resistance, accompanied often with fierce threats as well as unbounded praise, should excite congregations of ignorant men, need not surprise any one. The mobs in the towns did every now and then accept the inuendoes of the middle-class speakers as if they were intended to be advice and suggestions to themselves—and, thereupon, they were guilty of various outrages alarming to many, but which, nevertheless, served the purposes of the reformers, and were used by them as arguments to induce the aristocracy to yield in time to the moderate and rational demands made by the reforming party. In the country

the same causes of excitement extending to the peasants, roused them, not to make speeches and pass resolutions after the fashion of the middle-classes, but to make violent attacks similar to those made by the mobs in towns. The mobs who broke threshing-machines, and assaulted Mr. Bennett, member for Wilts, acted exactly as the rabble had done who broke the windows of the Duke of Wellington and assaulted the Duke himself. The men who thus congregated in the southern counties were besides accustomed to deeds of violence, and very constant forcible opposition to the law. As smugglers and poachers, many portions of the population of these southern counties had been in the constant habit of violating the law, in concert, and in large numbers. The only thing that was a cause of astonishment was the very small quantity of mischief that was done, and the ease with which the mutinous spirit was suppressed. The reason for this result, however, is plain and obvious. The whole of the instructed classes at this early stage of the reform contests, were anxious to proceed peaceably, and according to constitutional forms. They were therefore loud in their denunciations against any violence on the part both of the mobs in the towns, and of the farm labourers in the country. The special commissions brought the accused rioters and rick-burners to immediate trial, and condemned them to severe and instant punishment. They who were found guilty of arson were executed—and, although the number was of necessity small, the terror resulting from the execu-

tions was immense, and the crime of arson was at once suppressed, and has not since appeared except in solitary and rare instances. We shall, however, soon see the excitement of the people rising and extending. The resistance on the part of the aristocracy in the Lords to the Reform Bill created afterwards a fearful commotion—and we shall arrive at a moment when the peace of the whole country hung trembling in the balance—when the educated classes began seriously to contemplate resistance and insurrection—which were only prevented by a fortunate and most wise compliance on the part of the Lords, at the suggestion of the Duke of Wellington, to the will of the great majority of the enlightened classes throughout the country. But during the autumn and winter of 1830-31, though imprudent and hot-headed persons might and did use threatening language, the community as a whole were anxious to preserve the peace. The proper and legal modes of obtaining their wishes had yet to be tried, and the people generally had a great and wise faith in the reforming powers of their old institutions, and looked to them with a confident hope, that by their means would be obtained the salutary changes they so earnestly desired. The actual violence was entirely confined to the ignorant labourers in the country—and to the mobs of thieves and ruffians in the towns—and the first to resist, put down, and punish the mutinous, whether in town or country, were the middle classes who were most eager for reform.

The distress of the people formed at this time a favourite topic for declamation in parliament. The most noisy declaimers were, however, the angry high Tory party. The passing of catholic emancipation had put them into so bad a humour that they sought for, and were glad to find any subject for complaint, and attack upon the government. The more fanatical did not hesitate to ascribe every evil they discovered, or imagined, to the anger of Heaven, which they asserted was roused by the late flagrant departure by parliament from true protestant principles. The more long-sighted supposed these concessions dangerous as indications of a future policy. Taking them in conjunction with the reforms proposed by Mr. Peel in the law, and the changes propounded by him in the currency, and by Mr. Huskisson in our commercial and financial system, they fancied they could detect a fundamental change gradually going on in the minds of the great chiefs of their party, which must eventually lead to an utter subversion of the old Tory rule. They, therefore, were jealous, suspicious, and ready on all occasions to find fault, and exaggerate every evil and difficulty that occurred. In this way, or on this account, they were constantly harping on the distress of the country. They descanted on the ruin that impended over the agricultural interest, and endeavoured by every means in their power to alarm the chiefs of their party, and to excite the party itself to resistance. Some distress undoubtedly existed. It was exaggerated, however,

on all sides—first by the Tories, then by the Whigs. The immediate purpose of both being the same, though their ultimate aim was very different. The Tory party endeavoured to alarm the government, in the hope of separating them entirely from the reformers, and in this they succeeded. The Whigs for a time acted with the government; but when they found the Duke of Wellington endeavouring to win back his friends, and avoiding alliance with themselves, they then joined in the cry respecting the public distress, exaggerated its consequences, and attributed the whole mischief to the government. They did this early enough to make a sort of common cause with the high Tories, and so succeeded in defeating and destroying the government; and now that they had succeeded to their places, they still talked of distress in order to persuade the world that they were called to office in a time of peculiar difficulty —a period which they designated a 'most momentous crisis.' In all this, there was great exaggeration. The people, in spite of partial distress, were, on the whole, really well off, and daily improving in intelligence. This prosperity and increasing knowledge made them formidable now that they demanded reform.

While such was the disturbed, and, politically speaking, uncomfortable state of England, Ireland was in a condition still more turbulent and really alarming, and her people suffered far greater distress than was known to any portion of the English population. The late concession made by the imperial parliament

to the claims of the catholics had been so long delayed, that great permanent evil had been the consequence. The injustice of that delay excited both in England and Ireland feelings of strong indignation. In Ireland, as we have before stated, there naturally arose a class of men who made it their business to keep this feeling alive, to stir it up, and increase it by what is now but too well known under the name of *agitation*. Good and prudent men were to be found in every class who sanctioned, and in some measure aided these *agitators* in their endeavours to keep their countrymen on the alert. That such efforts should be needed all honest and wise men acknowledged to be a calamity, and so believing, they never failed to press upon the rulers of the country the danger necessarily resulting from the continued refusal of justice to a large and suffering population. The result proved the truth of their anticipations. Catholic emancipation was gained by agitation, and before it was so gained a large organized band of agitators had grown up, and constituted a fearful engine of mischief in Ireland;—the head of this band was Mr. O'Connell. To obtain for his catholic countrymen the privileges to which he thought them entitled, he had entirely relinquished a lucrative profession. He had, moreover, in the pursuit of his great political objects, lost the habits of that profession; had become accustomed to excitement, desultory exertion, and the pleasures of popularity. When emancipation was obtained his vocation was apparently

at an end, and though perhaps a man of a severe morality would at once have retired from the dangerous but captivating occupation and pre-eminence of Mr. O'Connell, he would have found the effort painful and difficult—for the immediate sacrifice needed was enormous—and the sudden change of pursuits and mode of occupation in the highest degree irksome and even laborious. A wise government would have endeavoured to lighten the labour of this task. One part of the sacrifice was an immediate loss of the means of subsistence. Mr. O'Connell had little, perhaps no private fortune, he had foregone the means of making one when he gave up the bar, he could not hope to continue receiving a *rent* from his grateful countrymen, unless he was constantly before them, as one labouring in their especial service. He had not the courage needed to return to his profession. The government unwisely omitted to find him an assured income, he was therefore compelled to starve or to agitate, and we need not wonder to see him accept the latter of these two painful alternatives. He renewed his business of agitation by starting the question of a repeal of the Union. Instead of taking warning from the past, and reducing Mr. O'Connell to insignificance by making him comfortable, the government set themselves to the work of opposing and forcibly silencing him. This was precisely what he desired. If the government were resolved not to purchase his silence by a place, they should have done the next best thing, and passed him by as utterly

insignificant. He had not now the same advantage as heretofore. The Union was not in the opinion of any rational man an injustice or an evil to Ireland; none but the ignorant believed that any advantage could be obtained by repeal, and none but those impelled by a sinister interest pretended to desire it. Neglect under such circumstances would have enforced silence by rendering noisy declamation utterly harmless.[1]

Mr. O'Connell was, however, a master in his trade of agitation, and the gullibility of his poor countrymen was without bounds. Every summer in Ireland is a time of famine for some portion of her people. The potato, which is the only food of a majority of the labouring population, can seldom be kept in a state fit for human food during twelve months, and many of the poorer families have not, even of this unwholesome provision, sufficient to last the year round. These poor people stint themselves in vain, as they cannot make the scanty crop maintain their families during the whole twelve months that must elapse between the one harvest and the next.[2] If, however,

[1] Mr. Hume used this argument to Sir R. Peel in a debate above described. Sir Robert gave the best, and indeed the only answer, by describing the extraordinary power of Mr. O'Connell, and his mischievous use of it. The difficulty was great, whatever course was adopted. To win over Mr. O'Connell by the offer of a lucrative office, seems never to have been thought of by Sir R. Peel or the Duke.

[2] 'An annual famine in Ireland is the immediate consequence of the use of the potato for the subsistence of the

there should come, and there always does come to some extent, a failure of this potato crop, then famine is the necessary consequence. The extent of the misery depends upon the extent of the failure—but no year passes without the existence of famine to some extent in Ireland—and the terrible diseases which famine always brings, are also an annual infliction upon the miserable poor of that unhappy land.

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people. There are two circumstances connected with the potato, which make it wholly unfit for the principal food of a nation.

'First, even the best quality becomes unfit for human food in less than twelve months, and consequently a period precedes each crop, during which the population are compelled to use food unwholesome in quality, as well as insufficient in quantity. The old potato begins to decay generally about the end of June, whilst the new crop does not come to maturity till the beginning of September; the length of the time of scarcity depends both on the time that the old crop will keep, and the season at which the new crop comes in.

'The second objection to the potato as the principal food for a people, is its bulkiness and consequent difficulty and expense of conveyance. In Ireland potatoes are often comparatively cheap twenty miles only from a place at which a famine exists. To carry potatoes that distance, even on a good road, enhances their price 50 per cent.

'During the months of June, July, August, and September, the whole of the labouring population suffer the severest privation, few of them having a sufficient quantity even of food which has begun to decay, and many being obliged to stay the cravings of hunger by resorting to the use of weeds in mixture with the half-putrid potato. At this season *starvation* sometimes occurs in those parts of Ireland in which all are equally necessitous, as in the Connemara district of Galway, in the district of Ennis in Mayo, and in parts of Kerry.'—*Evils of the State of Ireland*, by JOHN REVANS, p. 40. One of the few works which tell the truth respecting Ireland.

These dispensations of Providence, Mr. O'Connell employed as a means to his own ends; he attributed the misery which afflicted Ireland directly to England, and made the existing government responsible for the inevitable suffering of his country. This species of injustice has been the common means of attack for every demagogue of every age. The satirist and humorist, laughing at this gross and almost transparent fallacy, imputes the common occurrences of every-day life, and the little miseries of our homely existence to the great opponent of a nation, whose very name had become a subject of terror. But when he asked in much solemnity,

Who fills the butchers' shops with large blue flies?

he hardly fancied that his ludicrous questioning would be exceeded in the folly of its imputations by the grave appeal of a legislator in parliament. Mr. O'Gorman Mahon, however, an Irish landed proprietor, thus apostrophised the House of Commons:—

'Did hon. members imagine that they could prevent the unfortunate men who were five feet under snow from thinking they could better their condition by a repeal of the Union?' [Great laughter, says the reporter.] '*It might be said*,' continued the excited patriot, '*that England had not caused the snow*, but the people had the snow on them, and they thought that their connexion with England had reduced them to the state in which they now were.' Yet on this man, who could utter this outrageous nonsense, not

before his own ignorant countrymen, but in the English House of Commons, did Mr. O'Connell rely for assistance, his only assistance, for the repeal of what he called the Algerine Act which oppressed Ireland. 'I tell you,' he exclaimed to his hearers in Dublin, 'that O'Gorman Mahon and I will alone be able to prevent its renewal.' This act was a temporary one by which the lord-lieutenant had power to prevent meetings which he feared might be dangerous. During the latter part of the year, great misery had existed in various parts of the country, as a partial failure of the potato crop had occurred in the west.[1] The consequence was an aggravation of the usual misery; famine and disease were rife; armed bands of peasantry paraded

[1] Mr. Dominick Browne, presenting petitions to the House of Commons, on the 16th of February, 1831, says, after stating that there had been a run on the banks, which had aggravated the misery of the people, 'The immediate cause of this distress I believe to be the failure of the potato crop on the western coast, from, I believe, Donegal to Kerry, forming a zone, I may say, of ten or twelve miles in width. In the interior of the country the people will suffer in a similar degree two months hence; for in consequence of the want that was experienced there during the last summer, the people were obliged to dig up their potatoes earlier than usual, in consequence of which the crop will be out two months before the ordinary time.'—*Mirror of Parliament*, 1831, p. 273. This very description is a proof of Irish want of thrift. The early digging was destruction of the crop, and itself a mischief. Mr. Browne added, that before March the people would be starving by thousands; and that it was notorious that all along the whole west and south coast there had been an entire failure of the potato crop. The story is always the same from Ireland.

the country, and the ordinary course of law was deemed insufficient to repress the mischief. Throughout the kingdom besides a spirit of *unquiet* reigned, and this mischievous state of mind among the peasantry was fostered by the constant talking against, and vehement denunciations of England and English connexion by the agitators. They chose the most disturbed districts for the scene of their meetings and harangues—and thus increased the misery they found. The discontent induced men to cease from regular and consecutive labour. The landlords found rents precarious, and ran them up, hoping by that means to reimburse themselves for such as they lost in the general disturbance. But they who were in this excited state of mind were not likely to suffer distraint in silence or without resistance—the law could not be enforced without the aid of the military, and in various instances bloody encounters took place between the soldiers together with the armed police on the one side, and the people on the other. Mr. O'Connell and his friends increased, if they did not cause this mischief. They now insisted upon the repeal of the Union as the only means by which the burthen of high rents could be lessened. On one subject, indeed, they could and did enlist strong religious feeling into their service. The tithes paid to protestant clergymen for supposed religious service was by the Irish catholic farmer looked upon as a great grievance. It is clear, nevertheless, that he did not pay it in his character of farmer—and the injustice of the tithe was not in its

being a tax; the real injustice was applying a public property to ends which the public, that is the majority, did not desire to promote. Mr. O'Connell, however, was not particular on such subjects. He found the tithe obnoxious—he found that he could connect it with the religious antipathies of his countrymen—and he did so without scruple. He shouted for repeal and against tithes, and accused the government of being cruelly unjust since they levied a burthensome impost from a starving people, to maintain in luxury a protestant priesthood. Mr. Shiel, one of the most eloquent and instructed of Mr. O'Connell's friends, one indeed who was for some short time looked upon almost as a rival, and who, as an educated man, ought to have been averse to any such misleading of an ignorant people, thus addressed his excited and desperate hearers:—

"If the Union is not repealed within two years I am determined that I will pay neither rent, tithes, nor taxes. They may distrain my goods, but who'll buy, boys?—that's the word—who'll buy? Mind, I don't tell any man here to follow my advice; but so help me God, if I don't do it, you may call me Shiel of the silk gown.' Mr. Shiel has lived to repent this phrase. He has since acquired property—has had to receive, in place of paying rents—and has moreover attached himself to an English administration, bound and pledged to resist all attempts to obtain repeal. Whether his countrymen have called him Shiel of the silk gown, I know not—nor do I pretend to know what of impu-

tation and dishonour there may be in such an appellation. If it was meant to signify, that he had succumbed to and become the subservient follower of an existing administration, and received honour from them—and if so doing was to be deemed guilty and dishonourable—then all that can be said is, that Mr. Shiel has done all these things. To have done so, would not in ordinary cases be dishonourable—and, probably, Mr. Shiel has changed his mind since those days, and now sees that the fault was in making such a speech—not in acting on principles directly opposed to it.

In the year 1828, Lord Anglesey being lord-lieutenant, had given unpalatable advice to the government on the subject of Irish grievances, and afforded a pretext for his recal by being openly on terms of intimate friendship with persons who had been long obnoxious to the ascendancy party.[1] Lord Anglesey was recalled, and was by Mr. O'Connell immediately exalted into, and forthwith became the momentary idol of the Irish people.[2] The next year,

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[1] The Duke of Wellington gravely wrote thus to Lord Anglesey:—'I will not conceal from you, likewise, that your visit, and those of my Lord Chancellor, to Lord Cloncurry, and the attendance of Lord Cloncurry at the Roman-catholic Association immediately subsequent to the period at which he had the honour of receiving the king's representative in his house, are not circumstances calculated to give satisfaction to the king and to the public generally.'

[2] 'It was, as I have already intimated, no long time until Lord Anglesey framed opinions for himself in reference to Irish politics; and in accordance with his new views, he declared himself friendly to catholic emancipation and parliamentary

as we have seen, emancipation was granted, through fear, in place of being voluntarily conceded, as Lord Anglesey had advised. Lord Anglesey seemed likely, when the Whigs came into office, to be the most welcome viceroy that could be sent to Ireland, and he was re-appointed to that office with this expectation. It was not, however, Mr. O'Connell's cue to be satisfied, and he therefore quickly found subject of quarrel.[1]

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reform. The result was his recal in a year from the date of his appointment, and his departure with the honour of an ovation; he was escorted from Dublin to the water's edge by the entire population of that city.'—*Lord Cloncurry's Recollections*, p. 332.

[1] Lord Anglesey himself, though anxious, appears nevertheless to have expected a triumph on his return to Ireland, and discussed with his friends the mode of his entry into Dublin, in the expectation of being rapturously received. Mr. O'Connell quickly undeceived him. The pretext of quarrel was the appointment of Mr. Doherty ('dirty Doherty,' as it pleased Mr. O'Connell to have him called) to be Chief Justice of the Common Pleas in Ireland. 'O'Connell,' writes Lord Anglesey to his friend Lord Cloncurry, 'is my *avant courier*. He starts today with more mischief in hand than I have yet seen him charged with. I saw him yesterday for an hour and a half. I made no impression on him whatever, and I am now thoroughly convinced that he is bent upon desperate agitation.' A few days after, he thus gives a voice to his amazement at the sudden change in the opinion of the Irish people respecting himself:—

'Had there been the sort of reception decided upon that you expected only a few days ago, I should, of course, have mounted my horse at Ball's Bridge, and have endeavoured to show the most marked sensations of gratitude and high sensibility for a people who loved me. As public opinion has taken another course, I must adapt my conduct to the altered circumstances. . . . What I insist on is this, (and I charge you, my dear lord, very particularly upon the subject,) let no friend of mine come forward and mix himself up with my *unpopularity*. (What a

Lord Anglesey's popularity disappeared as suddenly as it had arisen; and he, like all his predecessors, found in Mr. O'Connell a fierce and unscrupulous opponent.

The change of administration was hailed as a fortunate event for Ireland; and until the new ministry began to make their Irish appointments they were popular. Mr. Stanley, the new Irish secretary, was too imperious and petulant to be long even on apparent good terms with Mr. O'Connell, who finding that cajolery did not produce the result he desired, determined to acquire through terror what was not conceded from good will. Before Lord Anglesey reached Ireland as the new Whig viceroy, Mr. O'Connell arrived in Dublin, and changed the whole current of popular feeling. Agitation was to be employed, and the nerves of Mr. Stanley and the government were to be tried after the approved fashion of the Catholic Association.

The proceedings and language of Mr. O'Connell became every day more hostile and threatening: he went about the country making violent harangues—gathering together numerous assemblages of the people, under colour of meetings for the purpose of petitioning or of celebrating some feast or festival. At all of these meetings he did his utmost

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word for *me* to make use of among Irishmen!!!) . . . . It will be curious to contrast the first days of 1829 with the last days of 1830; and the whole change of sentiment to be upon the plea of a solitary law appointment! Amazing!'—See *Lord Cloncurry's Recollections*, p. 413.

to excite his ignorant hearers, but always ended his speeches by mock recommendations to keep the peace; hoping thus to escape the law. He succeeded in alarming the country; and the Lord Lieutenant was at length, in December, 1830, induced to issue a circular in answer to the various applications made by the magistrates in different parts of the country for information as to the course they were to pursue in the present disturbed state of the country. The magistrates had stated that meetings tending to disturb the public peace and to the alarm of all peaceable people were held without let or hindrance, in every county: that these meetings were intended for intimidation; but that they were, although convened for some apparently legal purpose, really called to give force and organization to violent resistance; to frame schemes and create excitement, by which the people might set the law at defiance, and render property and person insecure throughout the whole country. Under these circumstances of grave peril, the magistrates asked for advice and direction. The circular of the Lord Lieutenant in answer set forth the intentions of the administration as to the future government of the country. It described the meetings which had been held, and which it was proposed to hold, as unlawful assemblies, and commanded the magistrates to use every means in their power to prevent and suppress all meetings of the people which they, upon inquiry, should believe to be dangerous to the public peace. While the determination to suppress dangerous

assemblies was thus made known, the government showed that they were not regardless of the people's sufferings. These indeed were great: in addition to the evil of famine, was now added that of fearful disease. Two hundred thousand persons were said to be without food. The weather became dreadfully severe. The people were without clothing, food, or fuel. The peasants crowded to the towns in thousands, carrying with them pestilence and death. The administration of that day, like that of all preceding and succeeding times, was without any plan for the government of Ireland. They could devise no method of permanent relief, and could only suggest immediate charity in aid of the sufferers. When parliament met, as we shall immediately see, the Chancellor of the Exchequer proposed to give, or, as it was said, to lend, 50,000*l.* on proper security, for the purpose of giving employment to the starving people; which employment was to be found in the thoroughly useless labour called public works—such as making roads where no roads were wanted, and pulling up and destroying those already made. This vote of money evinced a kind feeling, however, on the part of parliament; but such feelings had little effect upon Mr. O'Connell: his agitation went on.

The declared object of all this agitation was to excite the people to demand a repeal of the Union, as they had demanded emancipation; that, said Mr. O'Connell, was granted when the public unanimously demanded it—so it will be with repeal. He on all

occasions warned his hearers to be peaceable; but he took great care to excite alarm, both in the people and in the government, as well by the immense numbers he brought together as by the violence of the language he employed. He wished to make manifest his power, and he did this in two ways through these immense assemblages;—they were numerous and they were peaceable;—they came together because he called them —they remained quiet because such was his command. He who could collect this mighty force, and keep it peaceful and strictly obedient to his will, might, if he willed, convert the quiet and comparatively inert mass into a fierce and hostile army. And Mr. O'Connell wished to make the world believe that these immense—for they were immense—mobs were the people of Ireland; and he pointed significantly to France and Belgium, in order to induce the belief that against such forces an army would be powerless. But though Mr. O'Connell could, and did alarm the timid of his own country, and excite indignation in England, he never succeeded in alarming either the parliament or the government; and, on the present occasion, the Irish administration completely baffled and humiliated him.

He had given notice of a meeting in Dublin of the trades of that town, on the 27th of December, 1830. There was to be what they called a solemn procession in honour of Mr. O'Connell. This meeting and procession were no sooner announced than they were forbidden by the Lord-Lieutenant acting under the power

given him by the Act which Mr. O'Connell called the Algerine Act.[1] A proclamation, dated 25th December, was issued, in which the whole exhibition was prohibited, as calculated to lead to a disturbance of the public peace, and because it excited serious apprehensions in the minds of the peaceable subjects of the king, and because inflammatory language had been used by certain persons who had signified their intention to attend the meeting and procession.

Mr. O'Connell, in accordance with his long established rule of always obeying the law, immediately issued his proclamation, bidding the people not to meet, because the proclamation of the Lord-Lieutenant had an act of parliament to sustain it. On the day of the proposed meeting—viz., the 27th, he published a long and violent letter, addressed to his fellow-citizens, wherein he lavished great abuse on the government, and proposed a sort of procession on Tuesday, which was to present him an address.

One paragraph of the letter deserves to be recorded, because in it Mr. O'Connell makes a prophecy respecting repeal, which he ever after constantly repeated in spite of its being continually falsified. This never seemed to shake the faith of his confiding countrymen. So long as he was pleased to promise them repeal, so long were they willing to believe him. The words are these:—'Let us be in no hurry. Events in

[1] This act was passed in the 10th of Geo. IV., and intituled, 'An Act for the Suppression of dangerous Associations in Ireland.'

England, and on the continent of Europe, are working for us. Every succeeding day weakens the supporters of despotism in every clime and country. Each succeeding day strengthens the friends of cheap governments and free institutions. Patience, my dear fellow-countrymen, and Ireland will achieve one more bloodless and stainless change. Since I was born she has achieved two such glorious political revolutions. The first was in 1782, when she conquered legislative independence. The second was in 1829, when she won for her victory freedom of conscience. The third and best remains behind—the restoration of a domestic and reformed legislature, by the repeal of the Union. This we will also achieve if we persevere in a legal, constitutional, and peaceable course. . . . . *Let my advice but be followed, and I will venture to assert that the Union cannot last two years longer.*'

He shortly afterwards declared his intention of forming a society, to be called 'The General Association of Ireland for the Prevention of Unlawful Meetings.' On the 7th of January, however, a proclamation appeared prohibiting all meetings of such society as dangerous to the public peace. Upon this Mr. O'Connell endeavoured, in sundry ways, to gain his end of creating an organized body by which he might exercise control over the whole catholic population, as he had previously done by means of the Catholic Association. The Irish government were determined to frustrate this scheme, and succeeded by issuing proclamations against every proposed meeting;

and, in opposition to all the shifts and devices which Mr. O'Connell's ingenuity suggested, so long as the act above-mentioned remained in force, they were successful, and Mr. O'Connell was not only prevented in all his attempts to organize his agitating forces, but was himself, with certain others, prosecuted for having held various meetings in violation of the Lord-Lieutenant's proclamations, and for having conspired to violate and evade them. From this prosecution he endeavoured to escape by the aid of every possible shift, delay, form, and pretence. The government, now under the guidance of Mr. Stanley, held firmly to its purpose; and, at length, Mr. O'Connell not only withdrew his demurrer, which he had used as an artifice to persuade the people that the charge against him was bad in law, but also, subsequently, his plea of not guilty, which he had originally pleaded to certain of the counts in the indictment. This happened on the 12th of February, a few days after parliament met; and the transactions connected with the trial, and the government of Ireland, quickly formed a topic of discussion in both Houses; and excited some attention until the Reform Bill was proposed and absorbed all other topics of interest in itself. We shall soon see that Mr. O'Connell skilfully took advantage of the ministerial difficulties, and made a release from all the consequences of the conviction obtained by the Crown against him, the price of his support in parliament. There was indeed no formal understanding of this sort between the government and Mr. O'Connell—the

time had not yet come for such an occurrence. It will, however, be seen that Mr. O'Connell was spoken of in parliament, that the ministry were questioned as to the course they intended to pursue, and that though Mr. Stanley asserted, with much of eagerness, if not acerbity, that the law would take its course, such was not the result.

Such then was the unsettled and excited condition both of England and Ireland. The people, however, were generally full of hope. We were at peace with all the world, and though in some cases and among some classes distress might exist, the amount of this distress was not sufficient to weaken the nation, or to make its rulers desponding as to our future destiny. Reforms were needed—they were asked for, and expected—and men looked anxiously, but with hope, to the parliament which was now again to meet. Many, however, were the perils to be encountered by the measure so much desired by the people before it could be brought forward to undergo the ordeal of public discussion in parliament. The king, who had expressed no objections to Lord Grey, upon his stating that he must, if he accepted office, propose some measure of reform, was nevertheless anxious that no plan should be proposed during the present session—and with him, in this wish, strange to say, some in the cabinet coincided, who had, before they became ministers, been the most ardent in pressing the matter upon the attention of parliament. The intrigues which then took place will probably be

hidden for many years to come, possibly they may never be completely discovered—but this much is clear;—the original intention of the ministers respecting reform became much modified during the discussion of the measure to be proposed to parliament;—that what was originally conceived to be sufficient, fell far short of what was eventually proposed; and that this increase in the amount of concession was chiefly owing to the great and growing demands of the people themselves. Report indeed says, that Lord Durham was the person in the cabinet who was first moved by the popular wishes, and who most strenuously in the cabinet insisted on the necessity of a very liberal measure of reform; and that the Lord Chancellor was among the most timid, and was the least inclined spontaneously to grant those changes which the people so ardently desired. 'The first disposition of my mind,' said Lord Grey, on the 28th of March, 'certainly was to limit the reform within a much narrower compass, but after full consideration, and after having discussed the subjects with my colleagues, I was convinced that nothing short of the present measure was likely to lead to the satisfactory result of fulfilling the wishes of all classes and of giving to the government security and respect.'[1]

[1] Sir Robert Peel said in the House of Commons, on the 19th of April, 1831, 'But I well know—for I heard it from the noble Earl himself—that at the close of last year the measure of reform contemplated by Earl Grey was of a more moderate nature—yes, far more moderate than that which is now proposed. The present Lord Chancellor, too, said the same thing.'

The secret history of this period is to be found in the letters of the ministers of that day, and in their correspondence with the king through Sir Herbert Taylor;—the time may come when these letters may see the light;—now, however, we can only obtain some furtive glimpses of the facts as they occurred, and I have good reason to know that the description here given of the state of the king's mind is perfectly accurate. From the commencement he looked with great dislike upon the mere proposal of bringing in such a measure;—the measure proposed he considered a most dangerous and far too extensive a change, and nothing but terror of the probable consequence of such a proceeding, prevented him putting an end at once to the whole scheme by dismissing the Whig ministry. They were forced upon him much against his inclination, and he was glad of every defeat they encountered, and impatiently awaited an opportunity which might permit him to evince his dislike. He was, though a weak man, yet a very finished dissembler, and succeeded in making some at least of his ministers believe that they enjoyed his personal favour, when they were the objects of his most inveterate hate. We shall, in the sequel, see how eagerly he seized upon the first excuse which accident afforded, and the declining popularity of the Whigs permitted him to adopt, for ignominiously dismissing the whole administration at a blow: and that too when he was employing to them individually expressions of the utmost regard and confidence. And we shall find in

all the transactions about to be related that much of that hesitation and want of vigour in the ministers, which often called down upon them the blame of reformers, and much of the real difficulty they had to overcome, either was directly caused, or seriously increased by the vehement, though suppressed hostility of the king to many of his ministers personally, and to the great measure they were about to propose for acceptance to parliament.[1]

But whatever might be the views of Lord Grey as to the extent of the reform to be attempted, he was steadfast to his promise and pledge, as to making the attempt. And for the purpose of framing a large and comprehensive plan, he appointed a committee to discuss the whole subject, and report upon it to the cabinet. This committee consisted of Lord Durham, his own son-in-law, who was perfectly acquainted with Lord Grey's views on the subject—of Lord Duncannon, who was supposed to be well versed in borough history and details, more especially in Ireland, —of Sir James Graham, who was popular with the more ardent reformers, and at that time deemed

[1] The discussions on the civil list greatly offended the king, and he appealed to the law officers to know whether the House of Commons had the power of doing what their committee recommended with respect to certain salaries. The king remarked, that parliamentary reform was said to be desired, in order to give the people exclusive influence over the House of Commons. If such be its effect, said he, the authority which the committees appear to be usurping, will be transferred from the Crown to the people.

almost a *radical*—and of Lord John Russell, who had represented the Whig party in the House of Commons, when dealing with the question of reform in his various proposals on the subject.

The instructions which Lord Grey, with the approbation and assent of the cabinet, gave to this committee, were couched in general, and necessarily indefinite terms, but the scope of them was, that the committee should prepare the outline of a measure large enough to satisfy at once the public opinion, and to prevent any further change; but which, while thus extensive, should be based on property—should be connected with existing territorial divisions and existing rights. He desired, in short, a measure large enough to give what he deemed a sufficiently democratic character to the House of Commons, without in the least altering or trenching upon the monarchical form of our constitution, which was still to be King, Lords, and Commons, but the Commons was really to represent the intelligence, property, and feelings of the people. Such in general terms was the spirit of the instructions by which the committee was to be guided. This committee was formed, and the instructions given, so soon as the administration was definitively organized.

The committee then, at once and earnestly began its labours, constant discussions occurred, every point was sifted, every proposal weighed, calmly, amicably. The principles were first inquired into and agreed upon—then the details were minutely debated. As

point after point was agreed upon, Lord Durham, on behalf of the committee, recorded the decisions in writing; Lord John Russell furnished the materials for Schedules A and B, and these materials he obtained from others abroad who were labouring assiduously on his behalf.[1] Lord Durham eagerly pressed the proposal to give members to the metropolitan districts; and the question of the town franchise was the subject of anxious consideration by the whole of the committee. No one could doubt of the complete corruption of the freemen; and in what way to supply their place, so as to bring the respectable inhabitants of the towns into action as voters, was the first point of consideration with respect to the town constituencies. An annual payment of rent and rates and taxes was at length unanimously adopted as the best qualification; and here the important question arose as to what should be the amount of rent giving the right of voting. The first draft of the measure, as presented to the cabinet, put the amount doubtfully, mentioning the two sums of 15*l.* or 20*l.*, and at the same time proposed, as a matter to be considered, the

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[1] The secret history of the Schedules A and B cannot yet be written. Imputations of unfairness and jobbing to save Whig boroughs from disfranchisement, we shall hereafter find constantly and vehemently urged, and if my information be correct, not wholly without reason; and certainly some of the results did look exceedingly suspicious. Tavistock was the constant subject of hostile sarcasm, and always by some peculiar and happy fatality escaped from the drag net of the dreaded schedules.

propriety of uniting the ballot with this high franchise. The cabinet, however, upon consideration determined not to adopt the ballot, but by way of compromise reduced the franchise to 10*l.*

The measure as determined by the committee was explained in writing by Lord Durham, in the form of a report to the cabinet. This report set forth the separate points discussed and settled by the committee; the form and extent of all their proposals; and from these showed how the plans thus propounded would fulfil the conditions required by the instructions of the cabinet, by at once satisfying the present wishes of the nation and preventing all further innovation.

When hereafter we shall learn what the plan in all its variety of detail, as explained by Lord John Russell in the House of Commons, really was, we shall be able to appreciate more accurately the extraordinary value of this committee's labours, and the extraordinary boldness as well as wisdom of the proposals which constituted their plan. We must bear in mind the reluctance of the king, well known to the committee, though studiously kept out of public view, and even stoutly denied by the cabinet and their friends. Then we must recollect, that in this very cabinet were to be found timid friends and stubborn opponents; that the proposals, too, went far beyond the long-settled views of the Whig party, and exceeded what was looked for by the most sanguine of reformers. This boldness, however, was real wisdom: courage here as elsewhere led to safety; the very extent of the proposed reform ensured the

success of the measure, secured the existence of the ministry, and enabled the country for a time to withdraw its consideration from questions of organic reform, in order to devote it to matters of immediate and practical benefit. By satisfying fully the wishes of the people at once, the desire of any further change was almost completely prevented.[1]

The scheme thus propounded to the cabinet, and modified by them upon deliberation, was on the 30th of January, 1831, submitted by Lord Grey to the king at Brighton, by whom it was discussed from point to point, and eventually sanctioned. The whole was then reduced to the shape of the bill which was eventually proposed to parliament. The king, nevertheless, was anxious even at this moment to put off the proposal of the measure; he harped

[1] Mr. Stanley, in the last debate in the House of Commons on the English Reform Bill—viz., that on the Lords' amendments—accurately explained the wishes of the ministry respecting the *final* character of this measure, so far as regarded organic changes: 'We should not have attempted so extensive a measure of reform, except with the intention, that so far as we were concerned it was to be a final measure; and that in its extent, as we considered, lay its safety. We were anxious to go so far, in order that there should be no ground or pretence for going further; and most certainly it is my determination to resist any proposition, if such should ever be made, to carry this reform further. I accept this bill in payment of all demands, and I believe that the country also will receive it as a final settlement.' —*Mirror of Parliament*, 1832, p. 2463. And I am bound to say, though this view was exceedingly offensive to the far-going reformers, the country generally accepted it for the time at least as a settlement.

upon the probability of defeat, and the terrible mischiefs that would result from a general election in the present excited state of the people. He acknowledged that the ministry ought to be prepared with a plan, but he earnestly insisted upon the danger of now propounding it; and very explicitly stated, that he would not dissolve parliament if the plan, when submitted to it, should be rejected by the House of Commons, and would certainly never by any means endeavour to coerce the Lords into acquiescence, should the measure ever reach and be rejected by that House.

The two Houses re-assembled on the 3rd of February, the day to which they stood adjourned. Lord Grey in the Lords, and Lord Althorp in the Commons, gave on that evening the same information respecting the ministerial intentions on the subject of reform. Parliament was informed that the ministers had framed a measure to which they had unanimously assented—that this carefully-matured plan would be submitted to the House of Commons on Tuesday, the 1st of March. 'I am happy to say,' observed Lord Grey, 'that although, as may be supposed, the task has been one of very great difficulty, we have at last framed a measure which we trust will be found perfectly to correspond with the prayer of at least one of the petitions which I have had the honour to present to your lordships,' and be effected without exceeding the bounds of a just and well-advised moderation. 'My lords, the measure which it is our

intention to present to your consideration has received the entire, the unanimous concurrence of the whole of his Majesty's government. It will be submitted to your consideration so soon as it shall have gone through the other House of parliament, where it will originate."[1] Lord Althorp, in addition, informed the Commons that the ministers had resolved to intrust the duty of introducing this great measure to the Paymaster of the Forces, Lord John Russell; 'and we have done so,' he stated, 'because we thought it no more than due to his long perseverance in the cause of reform in times when it was unpopular. When it was difficult to obtain a hearing upon the subject, my noble friend brought forward plans of partial reform, and when even such plans of partial reform had but little chance of success. Now that the cause is prosperous we have thought it due to his perseverance and ability that he should be the person selected by the government to bring forward a plan of full and efficient reform.'[2] Lord John Russell was not of the cabinet. This circumstance gave Sir Charles Wetherell an opportunity of expressing a suspicion that by thus intrusting the introduction of the bill to a person not of the cabinet, the ministry intended to avoid its introduction as a cabinet measure. The arrangement was certainly a remarkable one, and we may be assured would not have been adopted had Lord John Russell

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1831, Sess. 1, p. 2.
[2] *Idem.* ibid. p. 9.

not been a scion of the house of Bedford or of some other equally powerful Whig family; but still the peculiarity of the arrangement did not justify the imputation upon any set of gentlemen, of so base as well as so ineffectual a manœuvre without having or pretending to have any evidence in support of the charge. The House of Commons or Lords, had they resolved to defeat the proposed measure, would not have allowed the ministers thus to escape from the responsibility of the proposal. Lord Althorp promptly replied to the insinuation and the question in which it had been conveyed, by declaring that although Lord John Russell was not a member of the cabinet, the measure nevertheless was a cabinet measure, and submitted with the full concurrence and responsibility of every member of the government. The Chancellor of the Exchequer justified the arrangement by the example of the ministry which allowed Burke to propound, while Paymaster of the Forces and not a cabinet minister, his proposition respecting the civil list expenditure. The supposed precedent was, however, somewhat distinguished from the present case—the plan propounded by Burke was his own, and Lord John Russell was not Mr. Burke. The observation of Lord Althorp was, however, triumphant. He said, 'If the government choose to fix upon any gentleman holding an official situation to bring forward any measure for which it renders itself responsible, it can, in the view of common sense, make no difference whatever whether the person so fixed on be a member

of the government or not.'[1] The incident, however, marked the temper of the times, and proved that the political strife about to be waged would be of no common violence—that the bitterness, and hate, and anger were so fierce as to make the contending parties for the moment careless of all those rules of courtesy by which the vehemence of parliamentary contests is usually subdued and softened.

A delay of more than three weeks was thus imposed upon the impatience of the public. Parliament, however, or rather the House of Commons, was not idle during that period. In both Houses petitions were presented as they came pouring in from all parts of the country in favour of reform generally, and for particular measures of reform which the people eagerly demanded. The forms of the House of Commons did not in those days, as at present, preclude discussion on the presentation of petitions. Every petition, therefore, gave occasion and opportunity for remark; and the debates of every day showed that the excitement and expectation of the public were hourly increasing.

In the House of Commons, this excitement was also in some measure aided by the discussions which took place on questions connected with economy and Ireland. On Friday, the 4th of February, the Chancellor of the Exchequer submitted to the House his plan for the settlement of the civil list, and proposed to refer it to the select committee which had

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1831, p. 9.

been appointed on the memorable motion of Sir Henry Parnell. This plan gave occasion, on the one hand, for much triumph on the part of the late ministry — a triumph to which they were fairly entitled; while on the other, the friends of economy were at first startled and shocked by the prospect which this long-expected and much-vaunted scheme held out for the heavily burdened people. Fortunately, however, for the present popularity of the administration, the public were induced to believe that the civil list was on this occasion employed as a mode of conciliating a hostile court, and preventing a powerful and insidious opposition to the much-desired measure of reform.

Sir Robert Peel, soon after the accession of the new ministry, made a statement in the House of Commons which the public at the time disregarded, considering it the vain declaration of a defeated minister, who sought to justify himself in the eyes of his friends and the country, by prophetic warnings of evil about to result from the conduct of his opponents. They little thought how soon his words would be verified: nor could they at that moment by any force of evidence or argument have been induced to believe, that every statement he made would be fulfilled to the letter; and that we should all arrive at a period in the history of the Whig administration, when the days of the Duke of Wellington's ministry would be looked back to with vain regret and despairing admiration, because of its

severe and wise frugality. On the 20th of December, 1830, Sir Robert Peel observed, when discussing the policy of the newly-appointed administration—

'With respect to retrenchment, that must be the profession of all governments—it is so of the present—it was so of the last; and though members in opposition may find fault with the continuance of this or that office, it is my firm belief, that not five years will elapse without the conviction arising in the public mind, that all its professions of political economy were fulfilled by the Duke of Wellington's government.'[1]

This government had been defeated on a question of supposed economy. They had proposed a civil list the united items of which amounted to 970,000*l.* When this was first proposed, on the 12th of November, 1830, a violent outcry was raised by the united opposition. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Goulburn, stated that he had made in this proposed plan a saving of 88,000*l.*, which was the utmost saving which could be safely effected. To this statement many objections had been raised. The first was, that the proposed amount was extravagant. Sir Henry Parnell said: 'It is impossible for us, as representatives of the people, to be satisfied with a saving of so small a sum upon such an expenditure.'[2] In addition to this, the confusion of accounts

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1830, p. 719.
[2] *Idem.* ibid. p. 222.

was an evil loudly complained of. 'All the divisions and subdivisions, additions and subtractions, which the right hon. gentleman has gone into, all go to make greater confusion.' So said Sir Henry Parnell.

Mr. Brougham, on the same occasion, also said, 'Another word as to my disappointment, and the disappointment of the country, regarding the surrenders and savings of the country. First, as to the last —the savings. It may be my error, but it seems to me that the Chancellor of the Exchequer has made out the savings to be greater than they really are.' Here the learned gentleman insisted that the supposed savings included the salaries of the late Duke of Clarence. He then passed to the surrenders, vehemently insisting that the House and the country had been led to suppose that the so-called hereditary revenues of the Crown had been given up. 'Then as to the hereditary revenues of the Crown, I did hope, and I expressed my gratitude, founded on that hope, that the Duchy of Lancaster would be included in the cession made by his Majesty. I now find that it is not included.'[1] And hereupon the learned and vehement speaker made a violent attack upon the speech which the ministers had put into the mouth of the king. It was in vain that the ministers endeavoured to explain. The whole affair was by the opposition declared to be so confused and extravagant a jumble, that they resolved to refer the civil list to a select committee

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1830, p. 226.

in order that a large saving should be effected, and some order be introduced, which would enable the world generally to understand the matter. The ministry resisted, were defeated, and resigned. And now Lord Althorp appeared in the character of Chancellor of the Exchequer, to perform the part on which his criticisms had been so freely expended while in opposition; and, strange to say, he disappointed his friends and satisfied and pleased his opponents. The result of all his consideration was simply to make a different distribution of the items of expense, but he left the actual expense nearly, if not entirely, what he found it. 'I think,' he said, 'the great recommendation of my plan is the abstraction of 460,000*l.* per annum from the civil list not under the control of parliament, and of placing it hereafter under the control of the House. The suggestion of the right honourable gentleman the late Chancellor of the Exchequer was that 970,000*l.* should be granted for the civil list, over the disbursement of which, this House could exercise no control. My plan is, that only 510,000*l.* should be so circumstanced: and, although what I have opened to the House may not occasion any immediate saving, it will ultimately lead to it.' What related to the personal comfort and dignity of the sovereign he proposed permanently and for the life of the king to settle and appropriate; but the other parts of the civil list he proposed either to place on the consolidated fund or in the annual estimates, and thus to keep those sources and items of

expense continually subject to the supervision and control of parliament. The sums which the preceding ministry had proposed to appropriate to the king's own personal expenses, all, in fact, which were included in the first and permanent class, Lord Althorp left undiminished;[1] and in the remaining portion a sum under 20,000*l.* was all that was ever pretended to be saved, and even this small sum was doubtful.[2]

This plan, and the items included in it, the Chancellor of the Exchequer proposed to submit to the committee, stating, however, very significantly, that he was not by any means prepared to permit any alteration or modification of his scheme.

On the subject of the hereditary revenues he at once frankly declared that he had been mistaken.

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[1] The language of Lord Althorp, when speaking of the expenses of the royal household, deserves remark, as it shows that a man may pass his life in finding fault, without being, in fact, the least aware of the actual circumstances which affect the question upon which he daily presumes to give peremptory opinions. 'But on this point (the household expenses) there is no actual reduction. * * * I will candidly confess, that when I first looked at this class of expenditure I was surprised at finding, that whilst the articles of life had diminished of late years so much in price, the expense of maintaining the royal household had considerably increased. But on looking more closely at the matter, I have come to the conclusion, that no reduction can be made in this class of expense without compelling his Majesty either to alter his style of living or to incur debt. I am convinced the House has no wish to compel his Majesty to do either.' On this subject some curious information may be found in the *Memoirs of Plumer Ward*, vol. ii. p. 176.

[2] Lord Althorp said 20,000*l.* Mr. Calvert declared that it was only between 5,000*l.* and 10,000*l.*—a paltry sum, he said, of which ministers were themselves ashamed.

When he first read the king's speech, he believed that it was intended to give up those revenues, including in that phrase those of the Duchy of Lancaster. He now not only did not believe such to have been the royal intention, but he did not, in fact, think that the king ought to be the first king called upon to give an account of his private revenue.

This is a strange reason. Somebody must be the first, and if such a thing were good at any time, it was good in the case of King William. The salaries of the ministers at foreign courts were by the proposed plan to be placed also on the consolidated fund, but not made *annually* subject to parliamentary supervision.

That Mr. Goulburn and his party should exult over such a statement cannot surprise us; but their joy may perhaps be supposed hardly a fair criterion of the wisdom or propriety of their opponents' scheme. But Sir Henry Parnell cannot be deemed an unfriendly critic; and his judgment, given with pain, at the moment made a profound, and for the ministers a most unfavourable impression on the public mind. This impression was, in some degree, and for a time, removed, by a suggestion which the people were glad to accept and believe—viz., that this abundant civil list was a sort of bribe to check the opposition of a hostile court. Sir Henry said that 'he approved of the intention to submit the proposed civil list to the committee already appointed, and of the division which had been made between the expenses for the comfort

and dignity of the sovereign, and those other expenses which had hitherto been most improperly confounded with the first, and unwisely as well as unjustly spoken of as the expenses of the king, under the general name of civil list. Thus far he was able, he said, to speak in approval of what his noble friend had proposed, but he could not approve of the mode in which the diplomatic salaries were to be dealt with, as he saw no reason why they should not be subjected to the annual scrutiny of parliament.' Without entering into details, he added, 'I cannot avoid expressing my disappointment at not finding the noble lord make any actual reductions below the statement of the late Chancellor of the Exchequer. In my opinion, there was room for such reductions, although I cannot undertake to say exactly where they ought to be made.' He, however, distinctly objected to the amount of the salaries of the household officers, and to the emoluments of the Lord Chamberlain, the Lord Steward, and the Master of the Horse. The closing remark of this old and attached friend of the Whig party ought to have been felt more keenly than the bitterest sarcasm in the mouth of an opponent.

'I regret exceedingly that his Majesty's present ministers, having the opportunity of making reductions in the offices to which I have alluded, have not taken advantage of the opportunity thus afforded them for manifesting their determination *of abiding by the opinions expressed by them before they became members of the cabinet.* By neglecting to take this

course, ministers have exhibited a want of that strict and severe spirit of economy, which, under the present circumstances of the country, ought to govern every single item of the public expenditure.'[1] Another old friend who had long fought the battle of opposition with the Whigs, but for whom no office had been yet found in the present government, Mr. Robert Gordon, was less reserved in his manner, and more bitter as well as more open in his disapprobation. He not only blamed his noble friend for not making 'a palpable and decided reduction in the civil list,' but he roundly accused him of 'mystifying' the subject. He charged the whole administration, with the noble personage now on the woolsack at its head, with inconsistency on the subject of the Duchy revenues, and entreated them to review the question, as the country would receive their statement with much sorrow.[2]

The whole debate, indeed, and the embarrassment of the ministry, proved the shrewdness of that policy which induced the late ministry to make the civil list the battle-field for this great party conflict. The present administration were by this political manœuvre forced to risk a loss of favour either with the court or the people. They knew full well that the king, and more particularly the queen, looked with very unfavourable eyes both on their policy and themselves. To soften this ill-feeling, and win if possible the royal favour, was the constant object of their endeavours,

[1] *Mirror of Parliament,* ibid. p. 25.

[2] *Idem.* ibid. p. 32.

and almost the chief object of their solicitude. For they expected that the king would take advantage of the first constitutional opportunity with which fortune might favour him to dismiss the whole party from his councils, should he continue in his present temper regarding them. There was consequently a sort of rivalry in eulogies among themselves when speaking either of the king or the queen.[1] Sir Henry Parnell, when moving for a select committee on the civil list, spoke of the king as the most popular and most deservedly popular monarch that ever sat on the English throne. Lord Althorp on the present occasion could hardly find words sufficiently eulogistic when stating that the king had determined to ask

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[1] This rivalry extended to their opponents; consequently strains of panegyric were always heard when the name of the king was mentioned. In the present debate, Mr. Goulburn, in answer to the laudation of Lord Althorp as above quoted, replied in the following terms:—'To those who have had an opportunity of personal access to his Majesty, to those who have communicated with him on matters of expenditure (*always a painful subject, but most so between a monarch and his minister*), such a decision gives no surprise; they must have anticipated it; and I can assure the noble lord that if there were anything that could endear his Majesty to his people more than he has already endeared himself, it would be his deep regret and just consideration for the present circumstances of the country.' All this praise was bestowed on the king upon this occasion, because he had not insisted upon asking for an outfit for the queen, for whose comfort and happiness every conceivable appliance was already provided. Nothing which money could purchase, or skill and ingenuity could devise, was wanting in the royal establishment.

no outfit for the queen.[1] He instanced the case of George III. on his marriage receiving 54,000*l.* for jewels for Queen Charlotte, besides her outfit; he also spoke of the Princess Charlotte, and the provision made for her by the country when she married. He stated that in the present case the Duke of Wellington considered a proposal to the Commons to provide for the queen not 'unreasonable.' But, said the noble lord, with as much of enthusiasm as he ever evinced, 'I have the satisfaction of informing the House, that his Majesty, with the liberality which belongs to the constitution of his mind, with that considerateness which renders him so attentive to the wishes of his subjects, and with that solicitude for the public welfare which has already given so much general satisfaction, declines to accept it. Other ministers under another king might perhaps be under the necessity of proposing a measure of this kind, even if they did not approve of it. We, however, have the happiness to serve a master who is not only ready to listen to every suggestion on our part, but who is also most anxious to suggest himself everything that occurs to him as of advantage to the country, and

[1] This supposed voluntary determination of the king not to accept an outfit for the queen really resulted from the opposition of Mr. C. Grant to it. He threatened to resign if it were proposed. The ministers were terrified: Lord Grey was exceedingly *hurt* by this inopportune fit of economy on the part of Mr. Grant; and at last the expedient was hit upon of making the king voluntarily declare that he wished for no outfit. The expedient, however, was very far from grateful to the king or queen.

as contributing to the welfare of his people. This disposition it is on the part of his Majesty which has caused the commencement of his reign to be hailed with so much satisfaction, and this disposition it is which will render his Majesty during the continuance of his reign what his Majesty has hitherto been—one of the most popular monarchs that ever occupied the throne."[1] But panegyric was not considered sufficient on this occasion. The king was quickly made to understand that his ministers were prepared rather to brave popular displeasure than royal ill-will on the subject of the royal income, and that no diminution of that income would be attempted by them. With the people, indeed, they ran no little risk in the matter. Economy and reform were the two popular desires at this time. Reform in parliament was sought for principally in the hope of being able by means of a reformed House of Commons to force frugality upon the government; and the present ministry had obtained much of their undoubted popularity by their professions on the score of a severe and searching economy. When the people saw these professions at the very outset of their ministerial career forgotten or disregarded by the Whigs, they (the people) began to doubt and to suspect the honesty and the purposes of the men whom they had so loudly praised, and from whom they had expected so much. But the ministerial

1 *Mirror of Parliament*, 1831, p. 26.

organs skilfully combated this distrust by dwelling on the hostility of the court, and the difficult task imposed now on the government, who had to win reform from a powerful aristocracy and a hostile court, being at the same time aided only by a suspicious and short-sighted people. The lasting benefits to flow from an effective parliamentary reform were contrasted with the temporary and partial evil of a somewhat extravagant civil list, which was asserted to be the absolutely necessary price to be paid by the people in order to obtain an acquiescence which, while it was indispensable, could only be obtained by such means. By degrees this view was accepted. The excitement respecting reform grew every day stronger, till at length it for a time superseded all other considerations. The people became as anxious as the ministers themselves, but for a different purpose, to put the king into a favourable state of mind, and to keep him in it. They possessed two means to attain this end—money and flattery: they allowed the ministry to be lavish of one—and they bestowed the other without stint or hesitation. So eager were they soon after in the pursuit of their object by this new policy, that they were ready absolutely to rail at and abuse any grumbling economical patriot who still ventured a criticism on the extravagance of the civil list; and they permitted almost without a murmur the ministers afterwards to settle on the queen the enormous income of 100,000*l.* per annum, in case she should survive the king her husband, because they looked upon this

vast sum as a means employed to purchase the good-will of the queen. So soon as this idea and opinion were commonly entertained, language of high-flown compliment was everywhere employed by reformers when speaking of their Majesties; although in the case of the queen a lurking suspicion as to her real intentions and feelings would ever and anon break out. The king, however, was on every occasion rapturously hailed as a *patriot* king, and every virtue which a king should or could possess was freely attributed to him.

On February 11th, the Chancellor of the Exchequer brought forward his budget. Great promises had been made, and great expectations raised respecting economy; but as the ministry did not materially curtail the expense of the government—as the sum to be provided remained nearly the same, the only possible saving must result from the mode in which the revenue was to be raised; and the Chancellor of the Exchequer now endeavoured to satisfy public expectation by taking off and replacing taxes. So long as he was occupied in the former operation he pleased everybody—but the moment he began to supply the loss thus occasioned to the revenue, a shout of opposition was raised on all sides; and certainly a more crude and less successful attempt at financial legerdemain was never practised before an expectant people. His whole statement was confused, and evinced a want of practice in the business and routine of office;—and the substance of his measure was even worse than the

manner of its exposition. The first part of his statement consisted of an enumeration of the taxes which he proposed to take off entirely, or to lessen, together with an estimate of the consequent probable loss to the revenue; the second division of his exposition respected the manner in which he intended to supply the deficiency thus created; in other words, the taxes which he intended to impose. He drew a distinction, and an accurate one, between the relief given by the remission of taxes, and the loss therefrom to the revenue—for in taxation it has been found, that you seldom double your income by doubling your tax; and so when you take off half a tax you do not of necessity lose one-half of your income—although, as regards the people, one-half of the burden may be considered remitted. Calculating after this fashion, he estimated the amount of his proposed relief at 4,080,000*l.*—the loss to the revenue, he supposed would be somewhat less—viz. 3,170,000*l.* This relief to the people and loss to the revenue arose in the following manner:—He proposed in the first place to abolish certain unnecessary places, but respecting them he made this remark—'I do not state these reductions as any great economy in point of money, but I state them as a great diminution of patronage.'[1] When we are only talking of money saving, we may throw this item of supposed advantage out of our account.

The year 1830, the last of the Duke of Wellington's

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1831, p. 168.

administration, had been remarkably distinguished. The income greatly exceeded the expenditure[1]—and on this happy state of things the present Chancellor of the Exchequer based his calculations and expectations. Taking the supplies needed to be 46,850,000*l.* and the income of the past year in round numbers to be 50,000,000*l.*, he proposed to take off certain taxes, and put on certain others, prefacing his statement with this remark: 'The necessities of the country call for a considerable reduction, if possible, of the taxes pressing on productive industry; and I do not know any period in which measures for the reduction of taxes on productive industry could be made with greater and better effect than at present. It is not when the revenue is falling, when manufactures and commerce are checked, and the country distressed, that a reduction of taxes tells with the most beneficial effect; it is in such a period as the present, when the industry of the country is going on in a steady progressive state of improvement, that such a reduction will afford the greatest relief to it.'[2] He then pro-

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[1] The totals, as stated in the public accounts, are as follows:—

Income	£55,934,963
Expenditure	54,223,414

This account includes the charge for collection, which then and now amounts to an enormous sum, which everybody seems afraid to look at or speak about. In 1830 the charge for collecting was £5,148,280.

[2] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1831, p. 169. This statement destroys the whole fabric of assertions which went to prove a state of great distress in the country at this time.

ceeded to range the taxes he proposed to take off or diminish in the three following classes:—

1. Those which being too heavy were less productive than they ought to be.
2. Those which pressed unequally on different classes of the people.
3. Those which press needlessly on the manufacturer, and take more out of the pockets of the people than they put into the Exchequer. Under which head most taxes may be classed.

1. The duty on tobacco he put into the first class, and he therefore proposed to reduce it; and to so arrange the taxation as to prohibit its growth in Ireland as well as England. This reduction of duty would lead to a loss of revenue to the amount of	£1,400,000
In the same class he ranged the tax on newspapers and advertisements, which he proposed also to reduce, calculating the loss to the revenue as	190,000
2. Of the second class, he mentioned that on seaborne coal, and proposed to take it off entirely, estimating the loss at	830,000
3. Under the third head he placed the tax on tallow candles, in order to abolish it; the loss being	420,000
Also that on printed calicoes; loss	[1]500,000
Also that on glass, which was to be reduced . .	600,000
Auction duty on land	60,000
And certain miscellaneous taxes, estimated at .	80,000
Making a total of	£4,080,000

[1] The sum taken from the people by this tax, Lord Althorp estimated at two millions, though half a million alone came to the Exchequer.

The loss that would actually take place, Lord Althorp supposed would be less than this; and from the data which he possessed, this real loss, that for which he considered himself bound to provide, he estimated at £3,170,000.

This was the pleasing side of the picture. These reductions, however, brought the income under the expenditure, and he had to exercise his ingenuity in the far more difficult task of imposing wise taxes in lieu of those which he thus proposed to abolish or reduce, and in this first effort as a financier Lord Althorp was not successful. He certainly did not satisfy the world; and instructed financiers wondered when they heard his proposals.

First, he proposed to equalize the duty on wine, from which operation he expected a gain of £257,000, but took it at	£240,000
Next was a proposal to regulate the timber duty, from which was expected a gain of	600,000
Then a tax on raw cotton was proposed, which was expected to give	500,000
A tax on coals exported: estimated gain . . .	100,000
A tax on passengers in steam-boats	100,000
A tax on the transfer of landed property, *and on the transfer of funded property*, of a half per cent.: estimated gain	1,200,000
Making a total of	£2,740,000

The reasons which induced the Chancellor of the Exchequer to consider this sum sufficient to meet the exigencies of the year he stated in the following manner. No words but his own will suffice for the occasion.

'Such being the amount of revenue which I expect to derive from the new taxes, I will now proceed to recapitulate the whole amount of revenue for the ensuing year. The income for the year 1830 was £50,060,000. If from this sum is deducted the loss by the taxes taken off in 1830, which amount to £2,910,000, the income left for the present year will be £47,150,000. Now I find, owing to the increased consumption which has been created of several articles by the reduction of the taxes upon them, there is an arrear due to the Excise of £580,000 at the beginning of this year more than there was at the commencement by the last. I may therefore reckon on this sum as part of the increased revenue for the year, and then it will amount to £47,730,000. I, however, deduct from this sum the taxes which I have taken off, and which I estimate at £3,170,000, and this leaves £44,560,000 for the revenue of the year. I add to this sum £2,740,000, for the amount of the new taxes which are to be imposed, and that raises the income to about £47,300,000; deducting from this sum the estimated expenditure for the year, which I have before shown would be £46,850,000, it will leave a clear surplus of £450,000.'[1]

This plan was no sooner proposed than a violent outcry was raised against it by men of all shades of political opinion, and almost every profession, and the elaborate scheme of the Chancellor of the Exchequer

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1831, p. 171.

was obliged immediately to be changed. On the 14th of February, he frankly stated that he was obliged to give up his proposed tax upon transfer of funded property, and could not, in consequence, remit the duty as he had intended on tobacco and glass.[1] Such was the inauspicious commencement of the financial projects of the new administration. Their subsequent conduct proved, indeed, but too much in accordance with this beginning. Plans ill conceived and devised upon insufficient evidence, have been in too many cases propounded only to be criticised and withdrawn. Uncertainty has thereby been continually created, and no commensurate good has followed these rash experiments of inexperienced statesmen.

The condition of the country, and more particularly that of Ireland, occupied chiefly the attention of parliament during the period that elapsed between the opening of the session and the proposal of the Reform Bill by Lord John Russell. From time to time highly coloured pictures were drawn of the distress that was said to prevail in many districts, more particularly of the south of Ireland. Mr. Dominick Browne asserted, and his assertion was corroborated by the administration, that actual famine existed in some localities—but Mr. Stanley, while admitting this description to be accurate, severely blamed the gentry of that part of Ireland for the apathy and niggard spirit with which they beheld the miseries of their suffering fellow-

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1831, p. 200.

countrymen. His words deserve to be remembered. They described with great truth the condition of Ireland —the distress of her people—their cries for succour— and their constant and mischievous dependence upon the charity of others for support. After having told their tale of misery in touching and eloquent language, Mr. Stanley added these observations:—

'Having stated thus much, I now come to a very painful part of my duty. Sir, it is my firm belief that a great part of the distress at present existing in Ireland is attributable to the conduct of the landlords. At a period when all around them are suffering so much, I do feel that they have not come forward as they ought to have done; and, as a proof, I may mention, that I have been furnished with a statement of the rental of one of the baronies I have named, amounting to 10,400*l.* a year; and the House will scarcely believe me, when I add, that out of this large rental no more has been contributed to relieve distress than 100*l.* Of this sum, 70*l.* was subscribed by residents, and 30*l.* by one individual, a constant absentee, residing in Kildare. Is government, then, to be called on to make up the deficiency of local subscriptions, or give additional means of employment? If I have used strong, perhaps harsh terms towards Irish landlords, I used them advisedly, and not without knowledge.'[1] Sir Robert Peel went further, and de-

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1831, p. 327.

clared that these applications for relief ought not to be listened to, because they only aggravated the evil. He asserted, with perfect truth, that the expectation of relief from government dried up the sources of private charity. 'The clergy and landlords, he said, are morally, not legally, bound to assist the suffering poor who live under their eye, and if they fail to do so, we can only express our surprise and indignation at it.'[1] An overruling necessity might exist, he allowed. The House could not see a whole population starve without making every possible attempt to relieve them. But he then seemed to foresee the great evil with which Irish improvidence was about to visit this country, and uttered wise warnings, that have unfortunately been uttered in vain.

Besides the distress, agitation was a topic of discussion, and the doings of Mr. O'Connell excited from the opposition very marked disapprobation. Mr. Stanley, in answer to a question put by Lord Chandos,[2] described the legal steps taken by the law-officers in Dublin against Mr. O'Connell, and the result;—adding, in the most unreserved and unconditional phrase, that the law would certainly be allowed to take its course. Having pleaded guilty to an indictment which charged him with having with others illegally and seditiously assembled, he (Mr. O'Connell) was now liable to

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1831, p. 327.

[2] *Idem*. p. 280.

punishment, which would certainly be inflicted.[1] In spite of this vehement declaration of a fixed determination, Mr. O'Connell remained on this occasion entirely unmolested.

The ministry accounted for this result by saying, that the act upon which the conviction had been obtained, expired on the dissolution of the parliament, and that before that period they were unable, from pressure of business, to obtain judgment. But on the other hand, this excuse was, by the opponents of the administration, asserted to be false, and a mere pretence—the real reason being, as they said, the importance of Mr. O'Connell's support, in carrying the Reform Bill. That bill was proposed on the 1st of March, and the equal strength of the contending parties was quickly perceived. Mr. O'Connell, taking advantage of the weakness of the administration, made his release from the consequences of the verdict against himself the price to be paid for his aid. As he gave his aid, no punishment was inflicted. Such were the two opposing statements—and that of the opposition seems most in accordance with the facts. On the dissolution of the parliament, the act under which Mr. O'Connell had been prosecuted, expired—and he

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[1] 'It (the Crown) has procured a verdict against Mr. O'Connell, and it will undoubtedly call him up to receive judgment on it.'—(*Mirror of Parliament*, 1831, p. 281.) Such were Mr. Stanley's words, but Mr. O'Connell never was called to receive judgment.

was for the present no further molested by ministerial attacks.

The first Whig Irish administration was formed upon the old and approved model, by which the chief secretary and the lord lieutenant are carefully selected so as to be always of *opposite* politics. Lord Anglesey was strongly inclined to concession—he desired *first* to redress the real grievances of Ireland, and *then* to expect and require affection and obedience from the people. Mr. Stanley, on the other hand, determined to make the people, as he said, fear the government—and would yield nothing to clamour lest it should have the appearance of a weak compliance through the influence of fear. A stormy discussion consequently followed, both in England and in Ireland, on the question of Mr. O'Connell's punishment. Mr. Stanley had evidently resolved to pursue Mr. O'Connell with the whole rigour of the law; and in the cabinet he was strongly supported. Lord Anglesey and his real advisers in Ireland urged with great earnestness the wisdom and necessity of milder proceedings. The following passage from the recollections of Lord Cloncurry describes with force and truth what really occurred, and is a melancholy illustration of the manner in which Ireland has unhappily been so long governed.[1]

[1] Who were the real advisers of Lord Anglesey, according to Lord Cloncurry, may be learned from the following passage from the work above quoted: 'Lord Anglesey gave me credit for being influenced by these circumstances, and not less, I believe, for being sincerely desirous of promoting the prosperity

'The collision to which I have just referred produced a personal estrangement between Mr. O'Connell and myself, which continued for three or four years. It did not, however, prevent the occurrence of a warm altercation between the attorney-general (now chief-justice) Blackburne and me upon his account. When he was brought to trial under the Proclamation (or, as he called it, the Algerine) Act, he pleaded guilty; but the term at which in the ordinary course he should have been brought up for judgment did not arrive until within a month or two of the expiration of the statute, and then I strongly urged upon Lord Anglesey the prudence of allowing him to escape, as the nominal infliction of a punishment which could only endure for a few weeks would only have the appearance of impotent malice; and while it might have created dangerous popular excitement, would but have added to his exasperation, and have given him a triumph upon the event of his liberation that must so speedily

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and well-founded peace of Ireland; and I was accordingly so far honoured by his confidence, as to be permitted to form a sort of private cabinet to which he frequently referred for counsel and assistance. In this extra-official council, of which I confess I was not at first a very willing member, were included Mr. George Villiers (now Earl of Clarendon), the late right hon. Anthony Blake, and Mr. William Henry Curran (now a judge of the Insolvent Debtor's Court). We met very frequently at dinner as well as at other periods, when matters occurred respecting which Lord Anglesey wished for information and advice.'—(p. 332.) This was during the first viceroyalty of Lord Anglesey. The same thing occurred when he went a second time to Ireland.

follow. Mr. Blackburne thought differently, and the dispute ran so high that Lord Anglesey thought it necessary to pledge both of us to proceed no further in the matter. I am not aware that this circumstance ever came to Mr. O'Connell's knowledge.'

In England and in the cabinet the same difference of opinion existed; and when the question of the dissolution of the parliament, upon the failure of the first Reform Bill in the Commons, was mooted in the cabinet, Mr. O'Connell's escape from punishment (the effect of the act upon which he was convicted being supposed to expire with the parliament) was one of the items adduced by those who were against the dissolution. That other members of the cabinet, as well as Mr. Stanley, had a violent personal antipathy to Mr. O'Connell is certain—and that they reluctantly allowed him to escape cannot be doubted. For the moment, however, his influence and his vote, together with that of his friends, were of importance, not merely with reference to the passing of the Reform bill, but to the existence of the ministry itself.[1] We need not wonder that, under such circumstances, the milder counsels prevailed, and that for the moment

[1] The ministers, when accepting office, considered their tenure so insecure, as to render anything like a general permanent plan of government impossible. They thought, expected, and declared, that a few months at the most would terminate their ministerial existence. And this uncertainty was one among the reasons assigned by Mr. Brougham for refusing the office of Attorney-General.

forbearance was practised towards the great agitator now within the clutches of the law. The opposition were not slow in remarking upon the changed relations of Mr. O'Connell and the administration. On the 28th of February a fierce and very angry discussion took place in the House of Commons between Mr. Stanley and Mr. O'Connell, from which it seemed probable that there was no chance of reconciliation—no hope of peace. On the 8th of March, however, during the long debate that occurred on the first reading of the Reform Bill, Mr. O'Connell pronounced an animated and very happy defence of the measure, and was thereupon loudly cheered by the ministerial benches. These symptoms were commented on by the next opposition speaker, Mr. Attwood, in terms that proved the significance of the proceeding. 'I cannot help congratulating the House,' Mr. Attwood sarcastically observed, 'on the cordial reception which the honourable member for Waterford has just met with from the ministerial benches, more particularly as it was to be feared some short time since that the political differences between the honourable gentleman and the right honourable gentlemen opposite might have endangered the peace of the country."[1] By this time ministers felt that every aid was needed on the part of the liberal party to carry their measure, and they were certainly not sorry to obtain the powerful support of Mr. O'Connell in debate, and in Ireland.

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1831, p. 734.

In the elections that afterwards succeeded the value of this support was demonstrated.

At length the momentous 1st of March arrived. The country had, by this time, been moved from one end to the other. The petitions under which the table of both Houses groaned proved the intensity of the popular feeling—its unanimity and its extent. There were few counter petitions.[1] The whole country seemed to acknowledge that some reform was needed; and great secrecy having been maintained as to the provisions of the forthcoming measure, there was no distinct object against which an adverse shaft could be directed. Reformers, those who called themselves so, emphatically, were remarkably united in the object of their demands—by far the larger part of the petitions praying for ballot, for shortening the duration of parliament, and what is called universal suffrage. Respecting the two former questions, there seemed, among reformers, not to be then any serious difference of opinion; on the subject of universal suffrage, however, this was not the case. The middle classes, generally, were opposed to this indefinite

[1] The Lord Chancellor indeed, when presenting a petition for a correction of the representative system, said, 'I trust there is no person prepared to oppose a petition of this nature; as, however reasonable the objections to the other demands for reform may be, the man who will say that the representation of the country is the image of perfection, and cannot be improved, would be a curiosity, and fitter for a museum or a menagerie than for a seat in the legislature.'—*Mirror of Parliament*, 1831, p. 517. And yet the Duke of Wellington had so said.

"extension, but as yet they had no precise mode of determining what the limit ought to be, and were therefore obliged to speak simply of an extension of the suffrage. Thus there was, as yet, no apparent opposition in the prayers of the people, though there was on this one point no real unanimity. When, however, the ministerial plan was announced and was accepted by the middle classes, the variety of opinions became openly manifest. Hitherto, all seemed of one mind, and the popular demand was all the more formidable.[1]

As the day for the ministerial exposition approached, the excitement throughout the country increased in intensity, and we shall find the topic constantly alluded to in the debates upon the proposed measure; this increasing excitement being employed by those favourable to the proposal as a means of frightening their opponents into acquiescence, while they who resisted it, accused the ministers of rashness

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[1] The *Quarterly Review* of this year, No. lxxxviii., acknowledged what it called not inaptly 'a chaos of unanimity,' and endeavoured to account for it thus: 'What can be the motive of all these sudden conversions to the cause of parliamentary reform? The answer is short enough, and must be on the lips of every one who is not afraid to look at the truth. It is the *dread of physical force*.'—p. 561, vol. 44. This was not true, except in the case of a few. The majority considered the state of the representation *an injustice*. The reader who delights in curious comparisons may make one, by comparing the above article of the *Quarterly*, supposed to have been written by Mr. Croker, with one expressly reviewing it in the *Westminster Review* of April, 1831, written by Colonel P. Thompson, the present member for Bradford.

and recklessness concerning the safety of the country, and with sacrificing the public weal to their lust of office. They also endeavoured to alarm the middle classes by prophecies of revolution, and pointed to France and to Belgium as fatal examples of the miseries resulting from sweeping and hasty attempts to remodel a constitution. In this struggle the reforming party were triumphant; the excitement every day increased, and bore down and swept away all opposition. We shall soon see how fierce a spirit was roused by the ministerial proposals.

Every avenue to the House of Commons was crowded early in the day by persons anxiously awaiting the hour at which they might be admitted to the gallery,[1] and a rush followed the opening the doors of the House like that which occurs at a theatre when some favourite performer is about to appear. And, indeed, a great scene was about to be enacted upon the most imposing stage the world offers. The things to be done were great, though the performers were of little mark or ability.

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[1] An incident *in* the House was evidence of the excitement in-doors. A member called upon the Speaker to determine whether a name placed at the back of a seat kept the seat for the member so placing it. The Speaker explained the custom as it had indeed long existed: 'I can only state that it always has been the custom, by courtesy, to allow members *who were present at prayers*, to retain the seats they had occupied till displaced by a division.' The seats were thus taken all over the House, which was inadequate to hold the whole of the members, but this was an inconvenience seldom felt. That it was felt now, proves the extraordinary interest created.

The chief performer on this memorable occasion was Lord John Russell, Paymaster of the Forces, but not then a member of the cabinet. This great compliment was paid the noble lord on account of his connexion with the house of Russell. The ministers, indeed, said that the noble lord's former efforts in favour of reform induced them to put him now in the front of the battle. The small changes which he had hitherto proposed, however, the hesitating manner in which he had spoken about reform, and the narrow principles upon which his proposals had hitherto been based, would hardly have won for him this great honour. The sagacity of his party could not fail to perceive the advantage to be derived from linking the name of one of the great Whig families with an important popular movement. The English people have, since the days of Charles II., looked with favour upon the house of Russell, and were well pleased to see a scion of that family again acting the part of a popular leader. The ministers took advantage of this feeling, and made Lord John Russell their spokesman.

Lord John Russell, though afterwards destined to occupy a high position, was at that time looked upon as of moderate parts—industrious, though slow, and respectable in conduct as well as ability. He had no pretension to the name of an orator—his utterance was hesitating; his voice thin, unmusical, and rendered utterly disagreeable by a drawling nasal twang, which would have tended seriously to render ineffective the most pointed and eloquent language, the

most profound thought, and even the most weighty argument. But in Lord John Russell's speaking none of these redeeming qualities was to be found. All he said was marked by plain good sense, and regulated generally by good taste. The views he took of every subject were the views merely of his class—without originality—unadorned by learning, unaided by any force or brilliancy of style. Mediocrity is the word which best describes the character and class of his intellect, and simply not to offend was the highest reach of his ability. The exposition which he now gave of the ministerial plan was simple, unaffected, and clear: the arrangement naturally suggested by the subject, brought the details before the House without confusion, and served to prevent doubt or misconception as to what was intended. The spirit which animated the speaker was that of wise conciliation; and the arguments adduced in support of his proposition were derived from the current, every-day reasoning familiar to every reader of a newspaper or magazine. The great topic, however, was not ennobled by one ray of genius—one spark of wit—one touch of eloquence; all was decorous, uniform, frigid mediocrity, the plodding exercise of an industrious, well-intentioned, but unhappily a dull scholar. The noble lord's address was unequal to the great occasion —to the remarkable assembly to which he addressed himself—and to the high position which he accidentally held. But the enthusiasm out of doors supplied

every deficiency. The slow vessel, freighted with the fortunes of reform, was borne onward by the rushing tide on which it was now launched, beyond the control of the ministry or their representative. On the good feeling and good sense of the people of England its destinies now entirely depended.

The noble lord commenced with a slight allusion to his former efforts in favour of reform, and excused their insignificance by a description of himself and his position. He had sought little, because he felt he could only accomplish small things; but now, speaking for the ministry, he was about to propose a great change—one, however, which the ministry had unanimously agreed to, and after patient consideration had determined to submit to parliament for adoption. He then proceeded to dispose of an objection which he supposed had been raised in consequence of Lord Grey's declaration that he would propose such a reform as would not endanger the settled institutions of the country, amongst which some people included the rotten boroughs. His mode of getting rid of the difficulty which he thus raised, was certainly short and easy: it was by simply saying, that the rotten boroughs were no part of those institutions. The objection and the answer were worthy of each other.

Advancing in his course, the noble speaker proposed to give a succinct description 'of the points on which reformers rest their case.' The first of these he said was, 'that the ancient constitution

said that no man should be taxed who had not consented to be taxed, either directly in his own person, or by his representative:' and in support of this assertion, he quoted the statute *de Tallagio non concedendo*, which at the same time he acknowledged was by some historians deemed of doubtful authority. Giving a very slight and superficial account of our ancient system of representation, he leaped to a conclusion by saying, 'there is no doubt, therefore, that at that early period the House of Commons did represent the people of England: there is no doubt, likewise, that the House of Commons as it now subsists, without entering into the history of the alterations it has from time to time undergone, does not represent the people of England.' Of the last proposition there might be little doubt, but to the first, assent cannot be so easily accorded by any one acquainted with the history of our country, unless, indeed, the word people be so narrowed in its signification as to destroy the value of the proposition for the purpose, to which it was here applied. The practical result which Lord John Russell drew from this most unsatisfactory historical disquisition, he stated in these words: '*Therefore*,' (the noble lord's *therefores* are peculiar) 'if we look at the question of right, the reformers have right in their favour. Then, if we consider what is reasonable,' (in the noble lord's opinion, then, *right* and *reasonable* are different things) 'we shall find a similar result.' On any view of the case, *then*,' (here we have another

logical conclusion,) 'it will be impossible to keep the constitution of the House as it exists at present.' The premise in the speaker's mind, which alone gave validity to his conclusion, was this somewhat startling proposition: 'It is impossible for anything that is wrong or unreasonable to remain in its present condition.' May we not be permitted to wonder, that any man with common capacity and ordinary experience should, with the eyes of all the world looking at him, with the ears of all the world intently listening to every word he utters, have laid down as the foundation of a vast superstructure of legislation, a proposition so utterly vain, futile and false.

The noble lord now introduced to the House of Commons an anonymous foreigner who was destined to a most active and restless existence during the rest of the debate. He was by the various speakers led hither and thither just as suited their purposes; and, by the time the debate came to an end, he had travelled many times from John-o'-Groats to the Land's End, besides taking sundry trips and excursions beyond the British territories during the short period of his erratic and imaginary existence. The noble lord introduced him with a description of his acquirements—he gave him all his own historical knowledge, and told him that he was about to be introduced to the most wealthy, most civilized, and most free country in the world—and he then supposed him suddenly to receive the astounding piece

of intelligence, that in this country the representatives of the people were chosen every six years as the guardians of its liberties. He (the noble lord) then asked, 'would he (meaning the foreigner) not be very curious and very anxious to hear in what way that operation was performed? Would he not be anxious to know the way in which this great and wise nation selected the members to the British parliament?' And the noble lord naturally supposed that the intelligent foreigner would have been somewhat astonished by a description of Gatton or Old Sarum. 'Would he not be astonished if he were taken to a green mound, and informed that it sent two members to parliament; or if he were walked into a park without the vestige of a dwelling, and told that it too sent two members to the British parliament?' In order to heighten his astonishment by contrast, the noble speaker then takes his wondering foreigner into the north of England and shows him populous places unrepresented—or worse than unrepresented, by having corrupt and narrow constituencies, who chose in the name of the inhabitants, but without their concurrence or voice, representatives to make laws for them and their country: and hereupon the noble lord suddenly exclaimed—'I say, then, if we appeal to reason, the reformers have reason on their side.' He hereupon states an objection, in order to answer it—'May it not be said that all this we allow to be absurd, but still the House of Commons enjoys the respect of the people, and therefore change would be

unwise. This argument, the noble lord said, had great weight, but that it did not rest on the truth; whatever might have been the feelings of the people in times past, at present they did not feel—did not profess to feel a respect for the House of Commons: while they did so, the argument was irresistible; but now that all respect had departed, it was worthless: and he again summed up all the argumentative part of his speech—that which was to justify the great change he was about to propose by the assertion already made. 'I end this argument,' he said, '*therefore*, by saying, that if the question be one of right—right is in favour of reform; if it be a question of reason—reason is in favour of reform; if it be a question of policy and expediency—policy and expediency are in favour of reform.'

Having thus rung the changes upon these idle phrases, and discovered the depths or rather the shallows of his philosophy, the noble lord proceeded to the real business he had to perform—viz., to describe the proposed scheme of the administration.

The first statement he made on this head was important; he declared that 'the ministers thought no half measures would be sufficient—that no trifling, no paltering with reform, could give stability to the Crown, strength to the parliament, or satisfaction to the country.'

In order to learn what would satisfy the people, it was necessary to learn what were the grievances of which the people complained, and here Lord John

Russell drew a distinction that is undoubtedly grateful to the rulers of mankind, but which is far from accurate, or satisfactory to those who are governed. 'We ought to look,' he said, 'with deference to the opinions of the people on a matter of grievance, but with regard to remedies, I should endeavour to discover, in communication with my friends, the relief that ought to be afforded.' Unfortunately the facts in the present instance did not agree with the distinction drawn by the speaker. The people's opinion was taken both with respect to the remedy and the grievance. In fact, it was impossible to separate the consideration of the one from that of the other in this case. The grievance or evil was inefficient and unequal representation—the remedy was to render what was inefficient, effective, what was unequal—equal. In both instances all that was possible was, an approximation to equality and efficiency—and with respect to the degree of that approximation, the popular opinion had already produced great effects. When the session of 1830 began, Lord Grey, being out of office, had no plan to propose—when he came into office, he believed a small change would have been sufficient, *but the pressure from without* compelled him to change his views, and induced him at this time—viz., in March, 1831, to propose a much larger plan than he originally intended. On March 28, Lord Grey confessed this in the following words:—'The first disposition of my mind certainly was to limit the reform within a much narrower compass,

but after full consideration, and after having discussed the subject with my colleagues, I was convinced that nothing short of the present measure was likely to lead to the satisfactory result of fulfilling the wishes of all classes, and giving to the government security and respect.' It thus appears, that with regard to remedies, in spite of the noble lord's disclaimer, the opinion of the people had been taken.

The people, Lord John Russell said, complained of three things—nomination by individuals, close and therefore corrupt corporations, and thirdly, of the expense of elections. The ministry acknowledged the existence of these evils, and now sought to propose an effective remedy.

Nomination boroughs had, by custom, become a recognised species of property, and to disfranchise them was, by the opponents of reform, called corporation spoliation and robbery; and yet in order to the remedy, absolute disfranchisement was necessary, as the number of the inhabitants in these places was so small as to make it 'a mere farce to take away the right from the person exercising it, and to give it to the borough.' But in the case of the close corporations amidst a large population, the case was different. At Gatton, a nomination borough, there were no inhabitants, or not sufficient inhabitants to receive the franchise, while in Bath, a close corporation, a large and intelligent constituency might easily be found. In the first instance, excision, absolute disfranchisement

was needed; in the second, you obtained your end by extending the suffrage.

But this disfranchisement was a bold step, and Lord John Russell was happy to flee to the authority of Sir Robert Peel for support, who, when proposing catholic emancipation, had proposed, at the same time, and carried his proposal into effect, to disfranchise 200,000 unoffending freeholders. Sir Robert had allowed this right to be a vested right—but he asserted that as it was one held in trust for the community, the community was justified, when the public interest required the abolition, at once to do away with the trust and right together. Appealing to the popular sympathy, Lord John Russell adroitly so shaped his argument, as to obtain the support of the multitude out of doors. 'Shall we say, then, that this principle is to be maintained, when the poor peasantry of Ireland are concerned; but that when it touches the great and the wealthy, we are not to venture to treat the question as the public interest demands? Shall we at once deprive the freeholder of Ireland of that right which he merely exercises as the constitution gave it to him, and shall we be afraid to touch the right of the noble proprietor of Gatton, who returns two members to parliament, although he derived no such right from the constitution?' The ministry determined not to shrink from this step, and resolved on disfranchisement.

Some rule was, however, necessary. To remodel the whole electoral system was beyond the view of

the administration—they sought, therefore, for some guide in their task, and determined to take as a principle when disfranchising, the population of the places possessing the right of returning members. As no census had been taken since the year 1821, the population returns of that year were adopted as a guide, and every borough having less than 2000 inhabitants was to be deprived entirely of the right; and the effect of this rule was the utter disfranchisement of sixty boroughs. But the ministry did not propose to stop there—forty-seven boroughs returning members, besides the sixty to be utterly disfranchised, had less than 4000 inhabitants, and these were now to have the right of sending one member only. Weymouth, which hitherto had, by some strange accident, the power of sending four members, was now to send only two. The number of members thus taken away amounted to 168, and this was the extent of disfranchisement proposed by the bill. A schedule, celebrated in the after discussions as Schedule A, contained the names of the 60 boroughs entirely disfranchised. Schedule B, that of the 47 boroughs deprived of one member each.

But now came the important question of the right of suffrage. Hitherto this right had varied in almost every borough. The new plan proposed to make it uniform all over the country. 'We propose,' said the noble lord, 'that the right of voting should be given to householders paying rates for houses of the yearly value of 10*l.* and upwards. Whether he be proprietor

or whether he only rent the house, the person rated will have the franchise upon certain conditions hereafter to be named. At the same time, it is not intended to deprive the present electors of their privilege to vote, provided they be resident.'

'With regard to resident voters we propose that they retain their right during life, but that no vote should be allowed hereafter excepting on the condition I have before stated, that the person claiming the right must be a householder to the extent of 10*l.* a year.'

In counties the suffrage was to be extended to all copyholders to the value of 10*l.* a year, and to leaseholders for not less than twenty-one years, whose leases have not been renewed within two years before the time of voting—and where the annual value is not less than 50*l.*

The House of Commons would by this process be deprived of 168 members—and the question now to be decided by the ministers was, in what way these vacancies were to be dealt with; and they wisely determined not to fill up all thus made; but resolved permanently to diminish the number of the House of Commons.

They proposed however to give the power of returning two members to seven large towns—viz.,

Manchester and Salford
Birmingham and Acton
Leeds
Greenwich, Deptford, and Woolwich, forming a district
Wolverhampton, Bilston, and Sedgeley combined
Sheffield
Sunderland and the Wearmouths;

and also to the following the right of sending one member each—viz.,

Brighton	Kendal
Blackburn	Bolton
Wolverhampton	Stockport
Macclesfield	Dudley
South Shields and Westoe	Tynemouth and North Shields
Warrington	Cheltenham
Huddersfield	Bradford
Halifax	Frome
Gateshead	Wakefield
Whitehaven, Workington, Harrington	Kidderminster [1]

There was still the metropolis unprovided for, containing a population of 8 or 900,000 [2] inhabitants. It was to be divided into four districts, and each district was to have the power of returning two members. The districts were—

Tower Hamlets	Holborn
Finsbury	Lambeth

Additions to the county representation were next proposed.

Yorkshire was to be divided into three Ridings, East, West, North, and each Riding was to return two members—and the following counties were to have two additional members—

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[1] This proposal differed from that made in the second Reform Bill, and eventually adopted.

[2] The figures in the text are throughout taken from the speech of the noble lord.

Chester	Wilts	Salop
Derby	Warwick	Stafford
Durham	Cumberland	Sussex
Gloucester	Northampton	Nottingham
Lancaster	Cornwall	Surrey
Norfolk	Devon	Northumberland
Somerset	Essex	Leicester
Suffolk	Kent	Southampton
Yorkshire	Lincoln	Worcester

So much of the proposed measure related to the two first evils mentioned—viz., nomination and close boroughs, and were proposed as remedies. There still remained the mischief of expensive elections. Now in order to cure this evil, it was proposed to have a registration of all voters in towns and counties —provisions regulating the mode in which such registration was to be effected were proposed; and for the purpose of facilitating the elections still more, districts were to be formed both in the counties and towns;[1] and polling places provided in each according to certain established regulations. The poll was to be kept open two days, closed on the third, and declared on the sixth.

Some of the boroughs left, though containing about 4000 inhabitants, would it was supposed still furnish only a very small constituency; and therefore, the proposal was to increase this number by additions

[1] A committee of the Privy Council was to be appointed to make the division of the counties, and a royal commission appointed to determine what towns were to receive additions from the surrounding county, and what additions.

from the surrounding neighbourhood. A commission to arrange this was to be appointed by the Crown.

One further proposal respecting the county representation was of great importance. 'In all those towns to which we propose to give the right of sending members to parliament, all persons who are in them entitled by their property to vote, shall be excluded from the right to vote for the county. . . . . At the same time, it is not intended to interfere with the franchise of those freeholders in towns who are at present entitled to vote.'

Such were the proposed regulations respecting the representation in England. All that now remained was to read the names of the boroughs included in Schedules A and B, a process which now seems dull and uninteresting, but which was, in fact, the most exciting, and deemed the most important incident of that night's important proceedings. For years these boroughs had been the object of every reformer's attack. They had been stigmatized as the shameful parts of the constitution, and the proposal now made to sweep them away was the circumstance which chiefly caused the extraordinary excitement which immediately succeeded, in every part of the country, and among all ranks of men. As regarded reformers, it was the solitary circumstance which they all concurred in approving;—and as respected the opponents of reform, the most cherished of all the peculiarities in our old system of representation was the nomination borough, and next to that the close borough. The great constitutional combat

which at once ensued, and which for many months was unceasingly maintained, arose on this topic. The private interest of the proprietors of the nomination boroughs, the corrupt interests of the members of the close corporations, gave energy and even fierceness to their resistance to the measure which thus proposed suddenly, and for ever, to destroy this darling property; while the chance of annihilating what for so long a period had been the object of their most intense dislike—the subject of their most vehement condemnation, excited hope in the minds of all reformers, and gave life and activity to all their efforts. Schedule A was the banner under which was fought and won the great battle of reform.[1]

The noble lord then proceeded to give an outline of the ministerial plan with respect to Scotland, which country he truly described as wholly destitute of popular representation, and which a speaker, indeed, in the succeeding debate called one vast rotten borough. The right of voting, which formerly had arisen from, and gone with the land, had by lapse of time been separated from it. The proprietors of the land, being induced or forced by need to sell it, had often while so doing retained the right of voting, which right they afterwards transmitted or aliened to persons in many cases not possessing an acre: and, in process of time, the right of voting came to be consi-

[1] Schedules A and B in the first Reform Bill will be found in Appendix A of this volume.

dered as a separate right, which, in fact, had no relation to the soil:—the numbers of voters dwindling by degrees, till at length every Scotch county was in the position of the nomination boroughs of England. This system was now to be entirely abolished by placing the right of voting in the hands of those who possessed the *dominium utile* of the land to the amount of 10*l.* per annum, whether in the nature of a freehold or copyhold; and also to leaseholders in possession, and having a written lease for nineteen years or beyond, to the amount of 50*l.* per annum rent, provided the lease had not been renewed within two years. In the boroughs, householders rated at 10*l.* per annum were to be the voters—under a registry somewhat similar to that proposed for England —and the number of members was to be fifty instead of forty-five.

Proceeding to Ireland, the noble lord in the same cursory manner described the provisions of the proposed plan as regarded that part of the empire. He stated that at the Union the representation had been entirely remodelled, and that consequently there were in Ireland no small and decayed boroughs similar to those existing in England. There were, however, close corporations rivalling those of England, and these required reform, to which end the noble lord proposed by his bill to give the right of voting to every resident occupying a house or property of the annual value of 10*l.* To Belfast, Limerick, and Waterford, which heretofore sent only one member each, an additional member was to be given, thus making 103

instead of 100 Irish members as settled at the Union. The arrangements as to elections were to be the same as those in England.

The noble lord then summed up the results of his plan as follows:—

The number of members belonging to this House is	658
The number to be disfranchised	168
Number remaining	490
Additional members for Scotland	5
Do. do. Ireland	3
Do. do. Wales	1
Do. do. the Metropolis	8
Do. do. large towns, England	34
Do. do. counties, England	55
Total additional members	106
Members now in the House	490
Total	596

Making a decrease of 62 members in the total number of representatives.

'I will now state,' added the noble lord, 'the number of additional persons who will be entitled to vote for counties, towns, and boroughs under this bill:—

The number in towns and boroughs in England already sending members, will be increased by	110,000
The electors of new towns (in England) sending members, I estimate at	50,000
Electors in London who will obtain the right of voting	95,000
Increase of electors in Scotland	60,000
In Ireland, perhaps	40,000
Increase in counties, England (at least)	100,000

These numbers at least will be entitled to vote; and upon the whole, I calculate that under this bill there will be added at least 500,000 persons to the number now exercising the right of sending members to parliament.'

The next duty of the noble lord was to explain the intentions of the ministers upon the two questions of the ballot, and shortening the duration of parliament: respecting both of which matters he stated that they had resolved to propose no alteration, leaving them to be dealt with by the parliament when reformed. This determination caused great disappointment amongst the great body of reformers, who had shown themselves singularly agreed upon the propriety of secret voting, and some shortening of the duration of parliament. A demand for the ballot and triennial parliaments had appeared prominently in almost every petition for reform presented *before* the proposal of the ministerial measure. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had also been long known as an ardent friend of the ballot, and on him and his influence men had greatly depended. The Lord Chancellor, however, had on many occasions argued against the adoption of it, and reformers began to suspect that his influence had in both instances checked the reforming tendencies of the cabinet.

Having thus explained the proposed plan, the noble lord closed his speech with a few observations upon the objections which he believed would be raised to it. The most important of those which he thus noticed, was the assertion that the proposed measure

would destroy the power of the aristocracy:—another to which he alluded was, that men of ability being deprived of close boroughs, would no longer be able to obtain seats in the House of Commons. The first of these objections expressed the real fears of those objecting—the last was a mere pretence, employed because it was considered a popular, and therefore effective means of attack. The noble lord, however, denied that either had any weight; he asserted that he believed populous towns would hereafter, as at that moment, seek and return distinguished men for their representatives; and he adduced, as a living instance in favour of his anticipation, the Attorney-General, Sir Thomas Denman, who sat for the large town of Nottingham, one of the few large town constituencies then existing. Upon the first objection Lord John Russell observed that he believed that the legitimate influences of wealth and station would always remain, and that such legitimate influence was all that should remain. He then alluded to certain threats which had been held out by the enemies of reform, and in his turn, in covert phrase indeed, threatened his opponents. He spoke of 'a call that had been made—a sort of summons which had gone forth to those connected with the aristocracy—to make a stand against the just request of the people to be represented in their own Commons House.' 'It has even been said,' he remarked, 'that that party could by its own numerical strength defeat any attempted sedition. Sir, the question is not one of sedition, or of numerical strength, but whether without some larger measure of

reform we can carry on the affairs of the country with the confidence and support of the people. If you cannot, it may be a question whether you can resist reform; but it is no question whatever, that there either must be a reform or the British constitution must perish. This House, even in its unreformed state, has had nothing to look to but the confidence, support, and sympathy of the nation. It is quite clear that if you refuse reform, that sympathy and confidence will in future be withheld. I ask you then whether, when the ministers of the Crown are convinced that reform is necessary—when they, serving a gracious master, who has permitted them to lay these propositions before the House—when they come forward to declare they think reform essential and indispensable—when the people out of doors by multitudes of petitions, by millions of voices, are calling for the same thing—I ask whether the House of Commons will say—We alone are the judges of our own purity—we despise the propositions of the ministry—we despise the warning voice of the people we profess to represent, and will keep our power any how, against all remonstrances, against all petitions, and take our chance of the dreadful consequences.' He then appealed to the aristocracy, and asked if the ministry which had yielded to no clamour—had sought no aid from any particular class—and which had put down sedition both in England and Ireland with unflinching firmness, but yet mercifully—he asked whether a ministry so acting had not a right to be believed when

they said that reform was necessary for the safety and happiness of the community—and that without it there was no means of insuring the permanency of its present constitution. With this dark threat of anticipated danger, the noble lord closed his exposition, and moved for leave to bring in a bill for amending the state of the representation of England and Wales.'[1]

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[1] I have often heard Lord Brougham relate a circumstance connected with this celebrated motion, which vividly illustrates the ignorance of the administration, even at the eleventh hour, as to the real feelings of the people. The members of the cabinet who were not in the House of Commons dined that day with the Lord Chancellor, whose secretary, Mr. now Sir Denis Le Marchant, sat under the gallery of the Commons, and sent half-hour bulletins to the noble lord, describing the progress of the debate. They ran thus—'Lord John has been up ten minutes; House very full; great interest and anxiety shown.' Another came describing the extraordinary sensation produced by the plan on both sides of the House. At last came one saying: 'Lord John is near the end of his speech—my next will tell you who follows him.' Now, said the noble host and narrator of the story, 'we had often talked over and guessed at the probable course of the opposition, and I always said, were I in Peel's place, I would not condescend to argue the point, but would, so soon as John Russell sat down, get up and declare that I would not debate so revolutionary, so mad a proposal; and would insist upon dividing upon it at once. If he does this, I used to say, we are dead beat; but if he allows himself to be drawn into a discussion, we shall succeed. When Le Marchant's bulletin at length came which was to tell us the course adopted by the opposition, I held the note unopened in my hand, and laughing, said—Now this decides our fate; therefore, let us take a glass of wine all round, in order that we may, with proper nerve, read the fatal missive. Having done so, I opened the note, and seeing the first line, which was—'Peel has been up twenty minutes,' I flourished the note round my head, and

The debate which followed upon this motion lasted for seven nights, (at that time an unprecedented number,) and should have elicited every possible argument, as well for as against the measure—and yet, sooth to say, this protracted debate was hardly better than a long, angry, wrangling quarrel, redounding little to the credit of the unreformed House of Commons, with respect either to its manners or its ability. They who supported the proposed bill dwelt chiefly on the striking and even ludicrous inconsistencies to be found in the existing system—upon the injustice of its inequalities, and its utter departure from every principle upon which the representative system of government is supposed to be established. They also dwelt with much emphasis upon the wishes of the great body of the people, and upon the danger necessarily resulting from

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shouted, Hurrah! hurrah! Victory! victory! Peel has been speaking twenty minutes; and so we took another glass to congratulate ourselves upon our good fortune.' Such is the anecdote, which proves, among other things, how uncertain as guides are such anecdotes for history. The events doubtless occurred much as Lord Brougham is accustomed to relate them; but Sir Robert Peel did not speak on that night's debate. Sir John Sebright seconded Lord John Russell's motion, and Sir Robert Inglis was the next succeeding speaker, in vehement, nay, fierce reply to Lord John. But I relate the story, because it proves how little aware the ministry was of the state of popular feeling; how little they knew of the intensity of that feeling when they believed that Sir Robert Peel *could* so have disposed of the proposed measure. So daring and insolent a disregard of popular opinion would have risked everything which Sir Robert Peel and every wise man holds dear.—See *Quarterly Review*, vol. xlvii. p. 464, where this is admitted.

a continued and obstinate refusal to gratify the rational desires of an excited and angry nation. The impolicy of such a refusal was indeed the favourite topic with all the ministerial speakers, as it enabled them to strike with effect at their great opponent, Sir Robert Peel. His prolonged resistance and eventual and tardy concession on the subject of the catholic claims was a never-failing theme, with those who desired to illustrate an argument based on the danger of delay, or to insist on the worthlessness of late and unwilling concessions. On the other hand, the opponents of the measure employed with untiring industry the favourite argument of Mr. Canning, who always replied to those who signalized the anomalies of our representative system, by saying, 'it works well.' Admitting all the obvious inconsistencies upon which you insist, still there is by this means gathered together a body of educated and intelligent men who fairly represent the varied interests of this great country. If you were to change the system for the most symmetrical arrangement, so far from obtaining a more accurate and useful representation of the whole community, you would arrive at a result exactly the reverse of what you expect. The power of the government would be thrown by this means into the hands of one class, and that the poorest, least educated, least intelligent of the whole nation. With the predominance of such a class, the existence of a monarchy and aristocracy is incompatible; and therefore I stand upon the present, which are the ancient ways of the constitution, rather than wander into

paths so full of doubt and danger. Such was Mr. Canning's invariable reply to every demand for a reform in parliament. Sir Robert Inglis, moreover, whose speech in answer to Lord John Russell comprised nearly all the arguments employed during the debate against the proposed measure asserted that Lord John Russell's pretension of *restoring* the constitution was based upon an inaccurate history of our institutions—and he fairly proved that at no period of our annals could the House of Commons be said to have more completely represented the people than at the very time chosen for its reform. Rapidly tracing the history of the House of Commons, he showed that at its commencement it was a congeries of incongruities, and that it had ever remained so—that as society improved in intelligence, the House of Commons improved also, and became from day to day more independent and more powerful. He defied Lord John Russell or any one else to point out the peculiar time of its history at which, as an institution, it was nearer perfection than at present—and he desired to know the precise æra which was taken as the model time, and to the likeness of which it was now sought to restore the representation. Upon the historical argument, the victory was wholly on the side of the anti-reformers—a victory which they owed to Mr. Brougham's artful though incorrect assertion, that he stood in his plan of reform upon the ancient ways of the constitution, and that he sought not revolution, but restoration—a declaration which he employed in order to anticipate an objection suggested by a prejudice of

the people, with which indeed the learned gentleman himself sympathised, against all systematic reasoning on the science of government. Mr. Bentham and his followers had long been accustomed to test the value of legislative as well as judicial institutions by a reference to that large experience which the history of mankind in all times and in all climes affords—and not solely by an appeal to that specific and more narrow experience derived from peculiar customs or national character. English statesmen, and more particularly English lawyers, are not accustomed to, and therefore dislike, this mode of dealing with institutions. Mr. Brougham was anxious to mark his own feelings with respect to it, as well as to win assent to his proposed plan by chiming in with a popular prejudice. He and his friends now reaped the reward of this subservience to national and personal antipathy, by suffering a somewhat inglorious defeat upon one great branch of the argument maintained on the question of reform.

The charge of *revolutionizing* the constitution was one with respect to which the ministry and their immediate friends were peculiarly susceptible, and which consequently their opponents constantly, unremittingly, brought against them. 'I restore, I reform,' said Lord John Russell. 'Restore, you do not,' said Sir Robert Inglis; 'for I will prove that what you now propose, never yet existed in this country;' and he was as good as his word, and proved to the letter that which he had asserted. But going one step further, he said:—'You complain

of incongruities in the system, and yet you produce a plan disfigured by the very blemishes you profess to remove. You do not reform, you *revolutionize* the constitution.' The answer of the reformers was here triumphant. 'We leave anomalies, because you oblige us so to do. We propose all that we can accomplish; if we attempted more, we should fail, but if we succeed in our endeavour, we shall have remedied in a great measure the evils of which we complain. You may give to our proposal the name of revolution, if you will; nicknames are not arguments, and a beneficial change is none the worse because you call it a revolution. That word revolution is employed merely to excite terror, and thus distract the judgment of the people. The horrors of the French revolution are pointed at, and the proposed ministerial measure is stigmatized as a wild and reckless attack upon settled and useful institutions, and infallibly leading to results similar to and equalling in atrocity the terrible outrages which attended the endeavours of the French nation to rescue itself from a degrading bondage, not because the cases are really similar, but because you hope thereby to terrify the timid, and induce them to withdraw their support from the cause of reform.' The prophecies of the anti-reformers thus spoken of, were indeed distinguished by a most dangerous precision; and by the result which they thus boldly invoked posterity will judge them. 'I firmly believe,' said Sir

Robert Inglis, 'that a representative system so entirely popular as that which the noble lord wishes to introduce, has never yet been found to co-exist with a free press on the one hand, and a monarchy on the other. No instance, Sir, I am sure, can be pointed out, where a popular representation, aided by a free press on the one hand, can be found in juxtaposition with a monarchy. On the very day when the Commonwealth murdered their king, they voted the House of Lords useless. I think the one thing will follow the other, as naturally as effect must follow cause. I say, then, in proportion as you increase the influence of the popular will in this House, you risk the existence of the sovereign and the House of Peers. The thing may not happen to-day or to-morrow; but I am firmly convinced, if the proposed plan be agreed to, that in the course of ten years the shock must be decisive. * * * I have no doubt that the intentions of the noble lord were not to disturb the Peers in their House; but whatever his intentions may be, *I for one am quite sure, that if this measure be carried, it will sweep the House of Lords clean in the course of ten years.*'[1] The school of politicians to which Sir Robert Inglis belongs, is especially fond of authority and precedent. Now the noble lord's measure, in all its essential particulars, did pass; twenty years, or nearly twenty years, have elapsed since that

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1831, p. 568.

peaceful revolution occurred, and none of these fearful predictions has been fulfilled. The constitution remains firm and untouched, and the prophet has happily lived to see his melancholy forebodings belied in every particular. Every change that is proposed in our institutions, and which affects any interest, great or small, is met by these dismal vaticinations. The Catholic Relief Bill, the Reform Bill, the repeal of the Corn Law Bill—all alike roused prophets of evil, and brought forth the same threats of mournful results. Some fifty times have we known the English constitution to be utterly subverted, and irretrievably ruined, but yet live to see it, in its pristine vigour, ruling a prosperous and happy people — to whose comfortable existence, indeed, the privilege of grumbling at will seems to be indispensably necessary.

They, however, who said that the expectations of most of those who supported the Reform Bill would be disappointed, were probably in the right. Few persons have accurately in their own minds settled the limits within which the beneficial influence of government is necessarily confined—more is almost universally believed to be within the legitimate province of legislation than really belongs to it. They therefore who thought that a well-intentioned government—one which sympathized with the community and honestly sought to promote its welfare—would be able by legislation to shield the people from misery, and who also believed that the Reform Bill was about to bring into existence such an honest

government, have already of necessity been disappointed; but they who said—Pass this bill, satisfy the just desires of the people, and you will preserve peace, maintain property and person secure from revolutionary violence, and all of us safe from the terrible evils attendant on violent changes—these men have not been disappointed. The result has proved that they were the true prophets on this occasion—the really far-sighted politicians—and more deserving of their country's gratitude than they who, under the excitement of a selfish interest, or a blind and bigoted attachment to antiquated forms, predicted every possible violence, confusion, and misery as the necessary consequence of the proposed alteration in our established institutions.

Among this latter class, we are compelled unfortunately to place Sir Robert Peel, whose experience on the question of the catholic claims had not taught him the lesson, which all statesmen of the present day who desire to be useful must learn—that timely concession to popular demands is necessary to ensure the peace, and thereby the welfare of society. His tardy and most reluctant yielding to an imperious necessity on the question of catholic emancipation, had won for himself no favour, and, obtained for the community only a very diminished benefit. He made many and bitter enemies by an unexpected desertion of principles and opinions often solemnly asserted, and to the last insisted on as true. But he gained no friends by this enforced compliance with

a just request, because it was enforced. What he grudgingly gave up, the people took without thanks. Had he been able to resist, they saw that no concession would have been allowed. He had acted without liberality, even while proposing a liberal measure; a will more imperious than his own coerced and compelled him—that will was the will of the people of Ireland, led and directed by Mr. O'Connell. But seeing that he had thus yielded to the desires of the Irish catholic people, men hoped that he would, with a good grace and frank liberality, concede to the almost unanimous feeling of the united empire, the reform they so ardently desired. They began to believe, that as he had shaken off the yoke by which all those thoughts, all those feelings (and they were many), in which he sympathised with the age in which he lived, had been hitherto coerced and confined, he would now continue in the path thus once entered upon, and be the great guide and leading light to a people, who would enthusiastically receive him as their chief. The least observant saw that a great career was open to Sir R. Peel. He had leaped the great barrier by which his onward course had been hitherto impeded; the first and most difficult and painful step had been taken; old friendships had been snapped asunder, ancient confidence was utterly broken, never again to be really re-established;—distrust, suspicion, degrading doubts, must ever attend him, if he sought by renewed subservience and assistance to solder the broken ties of

former connexions. Dire necessity might indeed induce his former friends to accept his proffered service; but again, it was evident there could be no hearty good-will between him and them; and any second deviation from the path of bigotry and error, any yielding to the necessities and exigencies which must at times beset a government, would receive no second pardon. Degradation and political ruin would of necessity follow any—the wisest—obedience to such necessity, no matter how terrible the danger of resistance—no matter how hopeless might be the chance of any successful opposition. In his case, it was clear no such plea would be again permitted. But on the other hand, all was easy should he boldly determine to become the real leader of the liberal party; and the reward would have been great. If when parliament met in 1830 he had come to an explanation with the Duke of Wellington, and if, finding him immoveable on the subject of reform (which, however, was by no means probable), he had at once separated himself from the administration, and declared that in his opinion some change, some yielding to the popular demands was absolutely needed, he might have led the whole people in his train, and they would have listened to his advice, and obeyed him as an oracle. Not having taken this course, the outspoken declaration of the Duke placed him in the position of a subservient follower to an imperious leader—the obedient second of an arbitrary commander-in-chief. Having accepted this

inferior office, he was, in the confusion that followed the Duke's defeat, confounded with the rabble of opposition. His resistance to the Reform Bill became a matter of minor importance. The excitement confounded all ordinary distinctions; and the buffoonery of Sir Charles Wetherell, who played jack-pudding on the occasion, and the captious and ignorant ravings of Mr. Orator Hunt, for the moment, and in the hurly burly which ensued, eclipsed or rather outshone the attempt at rational opposition made by the right honourable gentleman. Now, however, when the passions of the moment have passed away, when the clowns that figured in the tumult have become almost a subject of antiquarian research, the historian naturally looks for the name of Sir Robert Peel, and endeavours to ascertain the part he played in the confused scenes of those excited times. In the rush and turmoil of the hour, the worthy and the unworthy, the ignorant and the wise, the distinguished and the obscure, might be, and were all confounded in one heterogeneous mass; but now when the danger is over, when excitement has given place to calm, and the actors in that drama take the station which reason assigns to them, we are anxious to learn what the most distinguished did and said upon the occasion; what was the course pursued by the only really important person in the ranks of opposition. With respect to that opposition, almost the only question which posterity will care to ask, will be—What said Sir Robert Peel in that long debate?

The right honourable gentleman followed Lord Palmerston, and the juxtaposition gave an additional interest to the peculiarities of this discussion. Lord Palmerston had for years been a follower of Mr. Canning; and Mr. Canning had always been distinguished by his total, his indiscriminate opposition to every proposal, small or large, to reform the House of Commons; and he who had been his docile follower, now endeavoured to prove that Mr. Canning, had he been alive, would have pursued the course adopted by himself on the occasion, and suddenly assisted in carrying the most extensive change in our representative system ever proposed to the House of Commons with any chance of success. 'I feel convinced,' said the noble Secretary for Foreign Affairs, speaking of Mr. Canning, 'that if he had been standing here now, his mighty genius would have embraced within its comprehensive grasp all the various necessities upon which our own conclusions have been founded, and that he would in all probability have stated to the House, with powers, alas! how different from any now within these walls, the same opinions which I venture humbly to submit.'[1] Sir Robert Peel was too able a debater to allow so favourable an opportunity to escape, for paying a tribute of praise to a dead opponent, whom, while living, many thought he had treated with some lack of generosity. Invoking the name and the authority of Mr. Canning, he dexterously

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1831, p. 641.

sought as well to justify his own late changes of opinion and conduct, as to decry the reform now proposed. 'Would to God he were here to confound the sophistry and fallacy of reformers, and to win back the people, by the charms of his eloquence, to a right appreciation of the form of government under which they live. If Mr. Canning had lived, and had changed his opinions on this or on any other subject, none but high and generous motives would have influenced his course, and he would have come forward boldly and manfully to avow and to vindicate his change of opinion. But in no expression that ever fell from the lips of Mr. Canning—in no one step in his brilliant and noble career, can I trace the slightest indication of the probability of any such change.'[1] Precisely the same words might have been used respecting Sir Robert Peel himself upon the catholic question, had he died in 1828.

Leaving the question of authority, however, he proceeded to the question itself, and complained bitterly of the manner in which the king's name had been employed upon the occasion; endeavouring vainly to draw a distinction between the present question and that of catholic emancipation, by asserting that on the latter, it was publicly stated that the measure had not the sanction of the king—and therefore that ministers had no alternative but to declare that the measure was brought forward with his sanc-

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1831, p. 645.

tion: but that now no such assertion was needed, because no one had said that the ministry acted without the royal authority. The threat of dissolution also—a threat which had been significantly insinuated by Sir James Graham, called forth the complaints of the right honourable gentleman—he, however, declared he had no fear of dissolution, because he well knew that the existing constituencies would look upon the measure as one of confiscation. In this, however, the result proved either that he was seriously mistaken, or that he had used an argument in which he had himself no faith, although he hoped it might influence others. He next adverted to what he called the threat of civil commotion, predicted by the friends of the measure as the consequence of its rejection by parliament. For this he vehemently insisted the ministers were alone responsible, should such a calamity occur, because they, and they alone, he said, had raised the stormy waves of the multitude—had created that angry state of the public mind which they professed to fear. He seemed to forget that he had himself given his dread of civil commotion as a reason for his proposal to emancipate the catholics—and that if he were justified in changing our representative system (which he did by his measure) on that ground in Ireland; the present ministers might fairly propose another change in that system, when, as they believed, a still greater confusion would result throughout the empire from delaying it. Up to this point, then, of his speech, the right honourable gentleman had really left the

27350

question untouched—and had given nothing like a reason for refusing his assent to a measure, which he must by this time have seen was eagerly desired by an immense majority of the people of all ranks, except perhaps of that class to whom the chief power of parliament belonged under the existing system. He professed, however, to believe that the great body of the middle classes did not desire the new constitution, as he called the Reform Bill, to displace that old constitution under which England had become great and happy; and he employed the old argument of Mr. Canning in support of the old anomalous system, by an appeal to its effects. It works well, Mr. Canning was accustomed to say—and so now repeated Sir Robert Peel. And in order to set forth the excellence of the English constitution, he made long quotations from speeches of Lord John Russell, making covertly an accusation of inconsistency, which his own late conduct rendered it impossible for him to do directly.

One remark which he hazarded respecting the need of some reform excited a smile at the time—but must now cause, in the mind of any one looking calmly back to that excited period, unfeigned astonishment. 'I could not,' he said, 'have proposed reform as a minister of the Crown. I deprecated the agitation of such a question, at the instance of the Crown. But having left office, and being reduced to the station of a private individual, I was then at liberty to take other views of the subject. I have to balance this danger of moderate reform against the

monstrous evil of perpetual change in the executive government of this country; and I do not hesitate to avow that there might have been proposed certain alterations in our representative system, founded on safe principles, abjuring all confiscation, and limited in their degree, to which I would have assented.' His opponents naturally smiled at this assertion. They remembered the cases of East Retford and Grampound, in which there was no confiscation, but proved corruption, and that even in those cases they had found the right honourable gentleman a steadfast opponent. So much did he fear that middle class which he professed to respect, that he had resisted, and successfully, the proposal which most men, even the most fearful, deemed safe and politic—viz., to transfer the franchise from these close boroughs to the great towns of Manchester and Birmingham, insisting that to the neighbouring hundreds the power should be transferred. If, however, while minister, he had made this declaration—if, in pursuance of it, he had proposed a small and insignificant improvement, the cautious people of England would, for the time, have been content. He might have tested his piecemeal changes—an ample experience would have been allowed to him—and that revolution against which he now argued would not have occurred. As if, however, to prove the utter insignificance of his admission, he, step by step, defended every incongruity and every glaring absurdity of the existing system. The potwollopers of Preston he was delighted to behold, because the

existence of one or two towns with such a constituency gave the poor the semblance of representation, while the real power was carefully withheld from them. The nomination borough of Gatton—the corrupt town of Liverpool, seemed equally necessary parts of a mysterious, but still perfect structure, which, while it appeared in some particulars open to criticism, did in reality bring together the body of men most fitted for the task of government, of any which England contained.

This admirable consequence resulted wholly from the existence of the close and nomination boroughs, and, in proof of his assertion, he repeated the names of the most celebrated members of the House of Commons, and showed that, in every case, they found their way into the House by means of a close or nomination borough, and assumed that if, in place of them, large constituencies were established, all or most of these distinguished persons would have been excluded from parliament. Having thus eulogized the existing system, he closed his speech by a solemn objurgation of Lord Grey and the administration generally, for having, in a time of such change abroad, such excitement at home, ventured upon this great experiment. He, like all the other opponents of the bill, became a prophet; but, more wary than Sir Robert Inglis, he ventured on no specific time for the advent of the evil he foretold, neither did he describe what that evil was to be, but was content to compare the administration with the strong enemy of the

Philistines, who lighted three hundred brands, and scattered discord and dismay throughout the land. And such were the arguments which he submitted to an excited, nay angry, people—directed and led by the majority of the instructed and wealthy among them, and seeking to have some voice at least in the management of their own concerns!

The tone, however, of Sir Robert Peel's speech did not suit the opponents of the bill. It was far too calm, far too rational to satisfy their angry appetites. They therefore thrust themselves forward in all the debates, and, in their anger, trenched upon those wise rules of decorum by which alone a large deliberative assembly can be rendered a useful instrument of legislation. The three most remarkable actors in this scene of turbulence were Sir Charles Wetherell, Mr. Croker, the ex-Secretary of the Admiralty, and Mr. Hunt (nicknamed Orator Hunt); and the combination of these three persons for the purposes of obstruction proved the extraordinary mental condition of the anti-reform party, and showed how reckless was the conduct they were prepared to pursue. Sir Charles Wetherell had quarrelled with Sir Robert Peel and the Duke of Wellington on the question of the catholic relief. Mr. Croker had stood by his chiefs on that occasion, and incurred, in as far as a subordinate could incur, a share of the abuse so liberally showered upon his superiors by Sir Charles Wetherell. Mr. Hunt was what was called a radical reformer—had long been notorious as a mob orator and leader, and

for his seditious language had, during the arbitrary days of Lord Castlereagh, been imprisoned and fined. He was the person who presided at the meeting at Manchester when the yeomanry broke in, and were guilty of the violence which has since been stigmatized as the Manchester massacre. A person more odious to the Tory party, up to this moment, than Mr. Hunt could not readily have been found;—more heterogeneous materials, therefore, for a party combination could hardly be conceived. These persons, nevertheless, did act together and in concert, and the parts for the purpose of factious obstruction were not badly cast, though leading to hourly exhibitions of glaring inconsistency. Mr. Hunt was lauded to the skies by the whole Tory party, more especially by the country gentlemen, to whom formerly he had been a terror and an abomination. Sir Charles Wetherell was a sort of spoiled child of his friends, and Mr. Croker was tolerated—his obsequious following of his ministerial chief being for the moment forgotten, if not forgiven, now that his wrangling powers could be made useful as a stimulant in the turmoil and confusion which the angry borough proprietors were determined to create. Sir Charles Wetherell indulged in grave buffoonery upon the inconsistencies of the bill, assailed it in plain terms as a measure of spoliation and robbery—and by his quaint humour and highly elaborated and recondite jokes, often amused his hearers, and induced them to laugh, though not to vote with him. While Sir Charles and Mr. Croker

laboured hard to prove that the rabble, the mob were suddenly about to have the whole power of government placed in their hands—while they indulged in all the old stock phrases of abuse levelled at all reformers in the days of the French revolution—while they endeavoured to make out a parallel between the Reform Bill and Robespierre's constitution of the year III.,—and dwelt with angry horror upon the vast numbers of the poorer classes who would now become voters,—Mr. Hunt, with equal applause from the opposition party, industriously sought to prove that the measure was absolutely one of restriction and disfranchisement. He attempted to persuade the world, that he alone represented what he called the people—and assumed, upon all occasions, to speak with authority on the subject of the people's wishes—and in this capacity of the exclusively popular representative, he denounced the bill as an intended attack on the rights of the poor. Being exceedingly vain and weak, he was easily wrought upon by the flattery which men of high rank and station now suddenly lavished upon him. The measured criticism and qualified approbation with which at first he received the bill, were quickly changed for unmitigated abuse. The more violent his language, the more sure was he of praise from his new-made friends—and, at last, he lost his head altogether—became violent and offensive, and thus led the more excited of the friends of reform to adopt the well known parliamentary method employed to silence an obnoxious, and voluble, and uninteresting

speaker. The debates therefore in which he took part became almost invariably a scene of discreditable confusion; this delayed business, and thus aided the scheme of obstruction upon which the Tory party now acted.

The morning papers of Wednesday, the 2nd of March, carried the news of the ministerial proposal at once to all parts of the country, and it was received with one universal shout of joy and acceptance. Mr. John Smith, the member for Chichester, himself a sincere reformer, though proprietor of Midhurst, which appeared in Schedule A, during the debates which followed, in describing the effect of the measure on himself, gave in homely phrase a vivid description of the popular feeling respecting it. 'I honestly confess,' he said, after having described his own personal position as a borough proprietor, 'that when I first heard it (the ministerial proposal), it had the effect of taking away my breath, so surprised, so delighted was I to find the ministers so much in earnest.'[1] Such exactly were the general astonishment and pleasure. The conduct of the Whigs as a party had given birth to deep-rooted suspicions in the minds of the English people. Their language and their acts respecting parliamentary reform had always been ambiguous, and they appeared at all times to be consulting rather their own views as a party, than the interests of the country at large, when discussions respecting reform occurred. Many of the party were

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1831, p. 665.

well known to have been in secret conclave and in open parliament the vehement opponents of every proposal which tended really to increase the power of the people in the House of Commons. Every man in the party had always shaped his political course with reference to office,—at every change in the cabinet, at every period, they had intrigued, in private, for the purpose of getting place, and when defeated in their secret machinations, had flamed out as patriots, indignant because of the corruption of the times. Even in their better feelings they had been selfish. Considerations of their personal dignity were always thwarting them in their opportunities of doing good; vanity and personal jealousy rendered them distrustful of each other; no great principle could therefore keep them united. They feared and they contemned the people; were always anxious to make and keep friends with the court; and amid their most vehement assaults upon the objects of royal favour, carefully watched for and eagerly seized upon every opportunity, whether by force or artifice, to win their way to power. The chiefs of the Whig party were, however, by their large possessions, among the most powerful men of the country; they thought the country ought to be ruled by the great families of the aristocracy, they were consequently proud and haughty in their demeanour, and touchy respecting their personal dignity. This feeling made them tenaciously hold to their expressed opinions, and they mistook this steadfastness, which arose out of their inordinate idea of their own impor-

tance, for an honourable and patriotic regard for the welfare of their country. In all their controversies with George III. respecting the catholic claims, this was plainly apparent. They did not quarrel with the king, simply because they deemed his bigotry mischievous to the country, but because his dogged obstinacy also wounded their self-love. They were affronted and angry, therefore—not because injustice was done to the catholics, or because the empire was weakened by the discord which this injustice produced.[1] On the subject of parliamentary reform they had for years been entirely silent. With the more pronounced reformers they had been for a long time at open war; and treated with undisguised scorn and insolence every man, no matter how wise, how good, how instructed, who presumed even in philosophic speculation to advocate a real extension of the popular power in the state. In the early part of the present session, as we have seen, the Whigs as a party had no plan, and were far behind the people. Mr. Brougham, indeed, whom they as a party all disliked and feared, had learned in his Yorkshire canvass to appreciate more correctly the intensity of the popular wishes; and, in order to meet those wishes, had framed a

[1] If any one doubts this assertion, let him study carefully all the intrigues which took place between 1800 and 1829, on the subject of the catholic claims. The great Whig leaders were all ready to forego pressing those claims, provided they were permitted to do so in a manner to save their own self-love from harm.

much larger measure than any yet proposed to parliament, except by the radical reformers, who acted without any hope of producing the least legislative effect. When therefore the ministry came forward with this large measure of change, surprise heightened the popular pleasure, and exaggerated the expectation of good to be derived from it. The immediate practical result was the laying aside by all classes of reformers of their own peculiar opinions and wishes, and uniting as one man in demanding the measure of the ministers, and shouting in unison throughout the country—'The Bill, the whole Bill, *and nothing but the Bill!*' Up to this moment the immense majority of petitions in favour of parliamentary reform asked for ballot, triennial parliaments, and universal suffrage. But so soon as the ministerial proposal was made known, these demands were merged into the one petition for the REFORM BILL, as it was now emphatically called. Some of these petitions indeed exhibited instances of enlightened forbearance on the part of the poorer classes of petitioners, which served as an instructive commentary on that contumely with which it was the fashion to treat those who were insolently called the 'rabble' and 'the mob:' a touching rebuke to that unreasoning scorn so freely shown both by those who were really members of the aristocratic party, and talked about reform, and by those subservient followers of that party who sought by aping and exaggerating their offensive bearing, to become confounded with those whom they thus basely imi-

tated. The operatives of Glasgow, who had been for some time distinguished by their eager demand of a thoroughly *radical* reform, thus addressed the House of Commons.

'Your petitioners hail, with heartfelt satisfaction, the plan of reform now brought forward by his Majesty's ministers, as an earnest of the sincerity and firm determination on the part of the legislature to meet the rising wishes of the country.

'Your petitioners, though not included in the present mode of elective franchise, and although they are conscious of their capability to exercise this indisputable right, yet taking into view the corrupt and distracted state of parties, whose exclusive monopolies are about to be wrested from their grasp, the difficulties which ministers have to encounter in meeting so many conflicting interests, and sacrificing their own prejudice and pride of rank on the altar of public opinion, your petitioners humbly conceive that the present measure is best calculated to allay party turbulence, recal the country from the brink of inevitable revolution, and place the representation on a principle which carries with it a progressive improvement which must ultimately relieve the country from many grievous embarrassments, and secure to the labourer an ample and just share in the production of his own hands, and protect him in future from all vicious and galling restrictions.

'Your petitioners deprecate the most distant idea of a revolution, and although by such an event they

have little to lose, yet they dread the horrors that might be perpetrated, and thus refrain from insisting on their right to vote. They envy neither title nor wealth, but they wish to be placed in such a condition that they may enjoy in peace the reward of their own labour, and be enabled to raise themselves on their own resources to comfort and comparative independence; and in thus abandoning their claims for the present, your petitioners favourably hope that the high parties who have so bitterly opposed the ministerial plan of reform, and who ought to have taken the lead in concession, will now be induced to relinquish a part of their unjust claims; but should they still persevere in their wicked purposes, and should it be found necessary, your petitioners will willingly arm themselves to a man in the defence of the throne and his Majesty's patriotic councillors.'[1]

The excitement evinced by this petition was the result of many months spent in anxious expectation, when the Lords had rejected the measure. But the anger which it expresses was not at first felt. The people generally would not believe that what the ministry deliberately proposed either House would reject, and therefore their first impulse was entirely one of joy and thankfulness. This acceptance and approbation were not confined to the poor, or to one

[1] This petition was presented when the excitement was at the highest—viz., after the rejection of the second bill by the Lords. It is quoted above, because it illustrates strongly the feelings of the working-classes.

class of men—all classes, from the highest to the most insignificant, approved of the measure—and the working class, who had no expectation of deriving from it immediately the franchise, freely and frankly gave up their demands, and sided with those who would at once receive from its provisions the right of voting. The appeal on the part of Sir Robert Peel and others to the potwollopers was of no avail, and the antics played by Sir Charles Wetherell failed to amuse them out of their purpose, and the pretended patriotism of Mr. Hunt was equally powerless. The latter person fairly acknowledged that the people would not listen to him, when he endeavoured to explain wherein lay the imperfections of the proposed plan—though so long as he spoke in favour of it, they listened with pleasure. The long debate gave the people time to express their opinions, and the history of parliament affords no instance of equal enthusiasm and unanimity to that which was now evinced. The forms of the House were obliged to be modified, in order that the petitions of the people might be received—and the reception of a petition hostile to the measure became a remarkable event. This feeling out of doors gave naturally great offence to those in parliament who were in opposition. Threats, warnings—abuse, argument—angry and vehement declamation, were all employed in the hope of inducing the people to change their opinion. At the first moment when the petitions came pouring in from all parts of the country, all praying for the

immediate passing of the bill, the members in opposition appeared cowed and overborne, and acknowledged that the enthusiasm was unprecedented and unanimous. Mr. Hunt declared that the people had gone mad about the bill. But gathering courage and induced to believe what they hoped, the opposition at length asserted that a reaction had taken place: that although the people, being misled, were at first favourable to the measure, they were, now that they understood it, fast giving up their first impressions, and were about to be as vehement in opposition as they had hitherto been in approval. This assertion being often repeated and loudly insisted on, became at last the creed of the opposition, who thereupon resolved to put an end to the bill.[1]

The long debate being at length closed without any division, Lord John Russell, Lord Althorp, Lord Palmerston, Sir James Graham, Mr. Charles Grant, Mr. Stanley, the Attorney-General and the Solicitor-General were ordered on the 9th of March to bring in the bill.

On the same evening, Lord John Russell moved for leave to bring in a bill to amend the representation of

[1] Yet Mr. Hunt, who was very loud in his assertions as to this alleged change in the popular opinion, found it necessary, on the 24th of March, *after* the division on the second reading, and when a dissolution was felt to be imminent, to declare 'that there is one voice raised throughout the country for reform, and I have nowhere heard any expression of dissent from the measure of his Majesty's ministers.'

Scotland, which was ordered after a short debate: the Lord Advocate being substituted for the Attorney and Solicitor-General of England: the same motion was made respecting the representation of Ireland, and it was ordered accordingly: the name of Mr. Crampton, the Attorney-General for Ireland, being added to the list of persons so ordered.

The people throughout the three kingdoms were well aware that nothing but their most earnest and unanimous support could enable the ministers to pass these great measures of change. They therefore in every town, village, and hamlet met in large numbers, and petitioned both Houses to pass the measure. The first feeling upon hearing the proposal was, as I have already said, joyous surprise—then to that succeeded anxiety, lest their wishes and hopes should be disappointed. The conduct of the House of Commons was watched with the most painful earnestness. On the morning of Wednesday, from one end of London to the other, the people were seen running with eager countenances to and fro—congratulating each other, discussing the merits of the proposed measure, and the chances of its being carried. On the merits of the bill there was a quick decision; and so peremptory was it, that no criticism was permitted, lest even friendly endeavours to improve its provisions might be misconstrued into opposition. The people of England are not what is termed a demonstrative race —they feel strongly, but this feeling displays itself in calm and determined persevering action, not in

noisy, idle, or vapouring talk and exultation. They are accustomed also to constitutional forms, and through these forms they seek to obtain all such changes as they desire in the institutions of their country. This mode of proceeding has become the settled habit of the people—and that must be a vast expected good, or grievous wrong, which leads them to think, or speak of open and armed resistance to constituted authority. At this period of the reform crisis, there was therefore no thought of violence. They who wished the measure to succeed, set steadily to work, after their accustomed fashion—and the only peculiarity of the present time was, the universality of the excitement and the unanimity of opinion. A public meeting against the bill was almost impossible, not because any person was prevented from attending a meeting for such a purpose, but because a sufficient number to constitute an audience hostile to the bill could not be found. They however who favoured the proposed measure swarmed in all places, and a regular organization was formed for the purpose of obtaining in every place an expression of the popular will, and giving efficacy to it by every means which could set off and make vividly apparent the imposing numbers of those who desired the measure to become law.[1]

While the people thus combined, the friends of the

[1] The political unions, taking that of Birmingham as their model, now arose in all parts of the country, exciting great terror in the mind of the king, and effectively promoting thereby the cause of reform.

existing system conspired. A committee was formed for the purpose of arranging the mode and deciding upon the steps to be taken in opposition to the bill; and the lengths to which the party was prepared to go were quickly made apparent.[1]

On the 21st of March, Lord John Russell moved the second reading of the English Reform Bill—when Sir Richard Vyvyan moved, as an amendment, that it be read that day six months. The debate that ensued was but a repetition of the last—some new speakers appeared, but no new arguments. This was nothing remarkable—the whole session was in fact, from the day on which the bill was first proposed, one long debate upon its provisions. Every night the presentation of petitions, according to the forms of the House then existing, enabled members to discuss the whole question, at any length and as often as they pleased—consequently the formal debate on the second reading was of far less consequence, as far as the debating was concerned, than on ordinary occasions—though the actual division lost none of its importance. The debate nevertheless, despite the

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[1] Mr. Stanley, on the 19th of April, openly asserted and was not contradicted, that such conclave existed. In fact, on the next night Sir R. Peel fairly confessed the fact, and very properly justified the proceeding. Mr. Stanley described the difficulty experienced in framing the resolution moved by General Gascoigne, and asked, 'if repeated discussions were not held on not less than four different modifications of it, before the present was ultimately agreed to.'—See *Mirror of Parliament*, 1831, vol. ii. p. 1554.

weariness of the House, lasted two nights. At length, on the 22nd of March, the division occurred, when the second reading was carried by a majority of ONE.

This division was equivalent to a defeat. The doom of the ministry and their measure, or of the present House of Commons, was evidently sealed. The enthusiasm out of doors, however, sustained the ministers, and proved the wisdom of those who had determined to propose a measure so large and liberal as to obtain for it the vehement support of the whole people. An immediate dissolution was now called for by all classes of reformers—retreat on the part of the administration was impossible. The peace of the country had become involved in the matter, and could not have been maintained, had the ministry, according to the sinister and timid suggestions of the lukewarm and insincere supporters of the measure, resigned upon this defeat. The vigorous proceedings of the people precluded the possibility of hesitation. Petitions now came entreating the ministers to propose and the king to permit an instant dissolution—and then was seen how completely they were deceived who fancied that a change had taken place in the opinions of the people as to the merits of the measure. The same unanimity everywhere prevailed, and in every county, town, and borough the reformers began at once to organize their forces for the coming elections. All minor differences were merged, and candidates were sought who were favourable to the ministerial bill; and from each and every one the same pledge was

required—viz., to support the bill, the whole bill, and nothing but the bill: and immense pains were taken to prevent mistakes on this head, and every candidate's pretensions were tested by the one inquiry respecting his former career—had he shown himself a sincere and zealous reformer.

The ministers, although they felt that to carry the bill with the present House of Commons was impossible, were unable at once to dissolve the parliament, in the present state of the estimates. They proceeded therefore as if they seriously intended to continue their endeavours to pass the bill, and in the meantime proposed and carried the civil list—the navy and the army estimates. On the 23rd of March supply was moved, and a large portion of the army estimates voted. On the 25th, Sir James Graham moved portions of the navy estimates; and, on the same night, the civil list was provided for. Again, on the 28th of March, supplies of various kinds were granted—so on the 30th—and on that day the House was adjourned to the 12th of April.

While supply was thus creeping on, the ministers continued gravely to proceed with their reform measures. On the 24th of March, Mr. Stanley moved the first reading of the bill to amend the representation of Ireland—upon which there arose a long and violent debate. The whole question was again brought forward, and the immediate subject—viz., the representation of Ireland, entirely lost sight of. This general debating suited the purpose of the ministry in

two ways: it served to keep up and increase the excitement out of doors, and to blind the opposition; who were certainly either not aware of the ministerial purpose, or had not yet attained courage to put a stop to the supplies.

Behind the scenes there was indeed another game playing—one of great difficulty to the ministry. The king had yet to be persuaded to consent to a dissolution; and, whatever might be the language of the ministers and the people as to the patriotic desires and intentions of his Majesty, they who were near enough to judge, knew full well that the king was by no means hearty in the cause, and that he would not be sorry to dismiss his ministers and their Reform Bill together. Moreover he had, so soon as the discussions in the cabinet respecting the measures to be proposed began, given his ministers to understand that one great reason in his mind against the agitation of such a question, was the absolute necessity it entailed of a dissolution, which he dreaded, because of the excited state both of England and Ireland—more especially the latter. The second great evil which it would probably entail was, he foresaw, a disagreement between the two Houses—and these two reasons, which probably had been suggested to him by some secret counsellor and prompter, he most carefully and eagerly stated to his ministers as early as January in the year 1831.

But, nevertheless, the king was vain, and he was timid—he was flattered by his extraordinary popu-

larity, and he was fearful lest confusion might follow a rejection of the bill. The ministers were now compelled to play upon these two strings—to take every opportunity of making the king the subject of eulogy, of noisy and vociferous applause. He was delighted by the extravagant manifestations of his own popularity, with which the eager and confiding populace supplied him whenever he appeared in public. And he was, with great dexterity, made to feel that all this vehement applause resulted directly from the public belief that he sincerely desired reform, and intended to support his ministers by the whole weight of his prerogative in their endeavours to promote it. The people, from time to time, began to show symptoms of impatience and distrust—menaces were every now and then thrown out, which indeed the ministers were obliged openly to condemn, but which nevertheless very materially promoted the object they had in view, which was to make the king understand the ticklish condition of his present popularity, and the serious and imminent risk attending a positive rejection of the proposed measure.

The opposition was quite aware of the king's hesitation; and, for some time, they hoped that he might be induced to decide in their favour—refuse to dissolve parliament, and choose a new ministry. They were naturally anxious not offensively to press upon him, and therefore, for a time, they confined themselves simply to clamours, and violent attacks upon the ministers and their reform measure. They allowed the ordinary

business of the government to proceed, abstained from the violent step of stopping the supplies, and trusted to secret influences upon the mind of the king, resulting from the constant representations of his most confidential attendants—representations which they knew to be hostile to the ministerial proposal, and favourable to themselves. In the meantime every possible parliamentary expedient was to be tried for the purpose of alarming the king, except stopping the supplies; and, in truth, until a direct majority was proved to be against the bill, and the ministers upon some vital point had been defeated, there was no constitutional ground on which to rest the demand for their dismissal, and the king had no excuse for resorting to such a proceeding. It was clear, then, that the course of the opposition was first to frame some resolution hostile to the ministerial plan, which should give all the waverers an excuse for doing what they really wished to do—viz., to vote against the bill; then to force the ministers into a declaration that the success of such proposal would be fatal to their proposed measure; and thereupon to go to a division and obtain, as they were sure to do, a triumphant majority. This course they adopted in the full belief that the king's fear of a dissolution would lead him to risk the danger of dismissing his ministers, rather than incur all the confusion and turmoil of a general election. They saw that a motion of the sort above described would bring affairs to a crisis; they trusted to the king's secret wishes; and,

therefore, so soon as the House met on the 12th of April, proceeded to carry into effect their secret resolutions.

On the 28th of March, indeed, before the recess but after the division on the second reading, the impatience of the anti-reform party had, in the House of Lords, broken out, in the shape of a motion by Lord Wharncliffe for certain papers relative to the measure before the Commons—the motion being made avowedly for the purpose of bringing on a general discussion. The more timid members of the party waited to see the effect of this move before they expressed any opinion upon it, and when they found that the attempt in the Lords to attack and disparage the bill was premature, they deserted Lord Wharncliffe and left him almost alone to fight the battle he had provoked. He did fight the battle manfully; doing, with great dexterity and cleverness, what turned out to be a very impolitic thing. His admissions were remarkable, however, and reduced all further discussion respecting reform to a question of degree; as he fully and completely conceded the necessity for some, and that an ample reform. So far from denying that there was a strong feeling out of doors in favour of reform, he said he fully admitted it: 'Indeed that feeling is more than strong, it is irresistible. It is impossible for any man who is not absolutely blind, not to see that an administration which should be appointed upon the principle of withstanding all reform could no longer maintain its ground, but would be

left, night after night, in constant minorities.' The people had now taken the question into their hands, and to resist them was impossible. This state of things was, he declared, a great change, for the people formerly, as a body, did not advocate reform. He and other anti-reformers were accustomed to have a large party at their back to support them in their opposition to change; but now no such party existed, and further resistance to all reform was hopeless. This change resulted, he said, from the conduct of the House of Lords in the several cases of Grampound, Penryn, and East Retford, a conduct which, in his opinion, justified the people in their present determination, because the House of Lords had, by their proceedings in those cases, proved that all expectation of reform from them was hopeless. He then referred to the conduct of the House of Commons in 1821, and blamed it also for resisting the moderate proposal of Lord John Russell. The declaration of the Duke of Wellington was, he asserted, the climax of this unwise opposition —that which had rendered a reform government absolutely necessary, and he saw, upon the result of that declaration, that he must, per force, become himself a reformer, and such he now declared himself to be; and that he had expected and hoped to be able to support Lord Grey and his cabinet in the measure they were about to propose, because the composition of that government gave him good reason to believe that a moderate, though efficacious reform, would by them be proposed. An efficient reform — a large

reform he allowed to be necessary—inevitable, because the people without it would not be satisfied. But then his view of what was efficient was widely different from the present proposed plan, by which his well-grounded hopes, founded on the past conduct of the ministers, had been utterly deceived. Well grounded these hopes were, he contended, when he considered what the Whigs had done in former times; and speaking of the Lord Chancellor, he said he had, when a candidate for Yorkshire, 'gratified his constituents by a specimen of eloquence, wherein he propounded the plan of reform that he should bring forward upon the sitting of parliament, and that plan was nothing like the one now proposed—it had no resemblance to it.'[1] In further justification of his expectations of a

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1831, vol. ii. p. 1184. If this statement be accurate, Mr. Brougham must have very much enlarged his views when he concocted his scheme, as read to the opposition in November, 1830. The Lord Chancellor, in answer to Lord Carnarvon, on April 14, took occasion to remark upon this assertion, and said, 'There is no such very mighty difference between my project for reform and the plan matured by his Majesty's ministers. As he has so far thought fit to state his view of the case, your lordships will allow me to say that that plan went considerably further than that now under consideration.' And after expressing certain doubts respecting lopping off the boroughs, and his own change of mind and purpose as to them, he then gave the reason used by Lord J. Russell for the same purpose: 'I formerly brought forward a more confined measure, because I thought that what I then proposed was the utmost of what I should get.' His being in office, he said, increased his chance of obtaining a larger reform.—*Mirror of Parliament*, vol. ii. p. 1402.

moderate plan, he repeated the now hacknied attack on the friends of Mr. Canning, and the appeal to Lord John Russell's opinions, as expounded in his *Essay on the Constitution of England.* He then proceeded to criticise the ministerial bill in all its details, repeating the often stated arguments in favour of small boroughs, and against the *democratic* influence now about to be imported into the House of Commons. He dwelt upon the ulterior views of the radical reformers, and the power which this measure would give them to effect their jacobinical purposes; the use of the king's name in the discussion he made a topic of complaint, and insisted upon the impossibility of any ministry existing, if the bill were to become a law, without truckling mischievously to the will of the people. In short, he declared that the monarchy was about to be exchanged for a republic.

He closed this long and minute detail of objections by an allusion to the chance of a dissolution, which he declared would, in the present state of the popular feeling, bring together 'a convention parliament—a mere house of delegates, for there would be no room for deliberation in the House of Commons under such circumstances—no return would be made to the House from a populous place in which the member would not be pledged and bound down to vote for the bill and nothing but the bill.' And then he put a question intended as much for the king as the House of Lords—'When the bill comes to this House from the other House of parliament, thus backed by the

demands of the people, shall we be able to discuss it calmly?—will your lordships be able to refuse your assent to it? I say it is not fair to place the House of Lords in such a predicament; and if I could make my voice heard from the place where we are now deliberating, by the monarch on the throne, I would say, if parliament should be now dissolved by his Majesty's proclamation, it would place the House of Lords in a most perilous situation.' Lord Wharncliffe well knew the king's dread of a collision between the two Houses, and thus endeavoured to work on the king's fears in support of his side of the question, as the ministers were doing in support of theirs.

So soon as Lord Wharncliffe had closed his attack, his friends discovered, just as Lord Durham rose to reply, that the discussion was exceedingly irregular. The Chancellor, bred in the sturdy school of the House of Commons, was not a man to let pass so flagrant, as well as impolitic, an attempt to take an unfair advantage, without a severe and well merited castigation. Lord Sidmouth and Lord Eldon who made this attempt were just the very subjects upon whom the Chancellor would most delight to exhibit his sarcastic skill, and accordingly he showered down upon both these trembling offenders the fiery torrent of his wrath and ridicule. The appeal to common justice was irresistible, and Lord Durham proceeded.

The explanation given by Lord Durham was at that time considered especially important, because he

was one of the committee of four upon whom had been devolved the duty of drawing up the bill; and also, because, whether accurately or not is not now the question, he was generally believed to have been the person who induced the ministers to propose so bold—so extensive a scheme. But neither his speech nor the debate added really to the knowledge of the public as to the history of the bill, or to the arguments by which it had hitherto been defended. Those arguments were indeed, on the present occasion, most triumphantly put by Lord Durham, Lord Plunkett, and the Lord Chancellor, to whom no reply was attempted; and this move of the opposition did rather mischief than service to their cause. Lord Plunkett observed, upon this effect, and accounted for it by saying that Lord Wharncliffe 'had introduced the subject with so much fairness, had employed a tone upon the discussion, and had made admissions which were not calculated to obtain for him the support of the noble lords opposite, and that he had consequently not found a seconder, for the noble lord has said, that the claims of the people are irresistible, and that some degree of reform is necessary.'[1]

As regarded the actual result of Lord Wharncliffe's motion, this observation of Lord Plunkett was true; and was, with the public out of doors, what is called in debating language, a *telling* reply. But the admission made by Lord Wharncliffe, and the mode of it,

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1830, vol. ii. p. 1198.

were nevertheless dangerous circumstances for the administration. Lord Wharncliffe was thinking of the king;—and the king was likely to think that he might escape from the difficulties of his position—from his ministry and their bill, without incurring the risk of great popular obloquy, and of riot and confusion, by dismissing Lord Grey, and choosing some minister entertaining the same moderate and yet reforming views as those described by Lord Wharncliffe; and, had the Tory party been as wary and politic as that noble lord, such a course would probably have been adopted.[1] But the violence of the anti-reformers was so much in accordance with the sweeping declaration of the Duke of Wellington, that the artful concession made by one or two, more moderate or more cunning politicians, had no effect upon the general public, and therefore was not sufficient to embolden the king to take the course which his inclination prompted. At this very time the ministers were preparing the king's mind for a dissolution, and they had mentioned to, and discussed with him, the most obnoxious of all subjects—a creation of Peers.

He parried their efforts on these questions, by expressing his belief that the bill might be carried by the present House, if certain points were yielded—certain modifications conceded, which would not really affect the principle of the measure, or diminish its

[1] See *Quarterly Review*, vol. xlvii. p. 569. That such was the plan appears almost certain, and is, in fact, propounded by the *Quarterly Review* in the article to which we here refer.

efficiency. Of the persons surrounding the king, the majority were bitterly hostile to the measure; with these people the king was accustomed to converse, and his sentiments were quickly conveyed to the Tory leaders. The defeat of the ministers on the bill was now certain, and the opposition were endeavouring to form the plan of an administration, which should acknowledge the necessity of some reform, and who should propose a measure sufficiently large to satisfy the people, but not to alter the present system, or to change the hands in which the power rested of choosing the House of Commons. To this object evidently Lord Wharncliffe looked—but all these schemes were rendered abortive by the rising feelings of the people. Every day gave evidence of an increase in the excitement out of doors. This was no passing or partial movement. The whole people rose, and the might of a whole people so roused, our aristocracy were too wise to withstand. The king, too, feared, trembled, and obeyed.

In this debate, the Duke of Wellington gave that explanation of the causes of his retirement, which I have already described; showing clearly that he dreaded the question of reform, and was determined to have no participation in any attempt to remodel our representative system. By retiring he escaped this responsibility, but did not escape what probably he hoped to have avoided—viz., the reform itself. His conduct from the beginning to the end was a mistake, even in his own view of the case. He ought to have seen

that reform was inevitable. By yielding and remaining in office, he would have contented the people with a much smaller measure than that which the Whigs were obliged to propose;—their object being not merely to content the present wishes of the people, but to secure the powers of government in their own hands for many years to come. To effect this a large reform was necessary. This, therefore, at the instigation of the bolder spirits in the cabinet they proposed—fearing, trembling, hesitating—and when they saw the storm which blew so fiercely in their favour, they were deeply moved and alarmed—and resolved to make the measure, if possible, a final move—and not the precursor, as their opponents declared it would be, of still further and more extensive organic changes. We shall see hereafter how little they had really to fear upon this head.

The motion of Lord Wharncliffe was, in fact, a ministerial triumph, and served only to excite the people yet more—to make them perceive that the reform would not be carried without steadfastness and unanimity.

When the House met after the recess, ministers proposed to go into committee on the bill for the reform of the representation of England. But the tactics of the opposition now came into play, and General Gascoyne's motion of which notice was given on the 30th, that it be an instruction to the committee that the numbers of representatives fixed by the Acts of Union for each country be not altered,'

would of necessity come on for discussion before the House could resolve itself into committee. This was just the sort of motion best suited to the exigency. It was not against all reform, though it would have the effect, as they hoped, of defeating the ministerial measure. Many persons also sincerely desirous of a reform in the representation, considered a diminution of the number of the English members, combined with an increase of those of Ireland, was in itself not a benefit. Thus honest reformers might vote for it—and they also who did not openly dare to declare their real feelings, gladly seized this opportunity to check, and if possible to ruin, the measure, without appearing to oppose the principles upon which it was based.

But on April 18, Lord John Russell, on moving the order of the day for going into committee on the bill, explained the alterations which the ministers proposed to make in the measure—alterations, neither few nor unimportant. One of these was directly connected with the discussion upon which the House was about to enter,—ministers having determined to diminish the whole number of representatives by 31 only, in place of 62. On this, General Gascoyne, member for Liverpool, moved as an amendment this resolution, 'That it is the opinion of this House, that the total number of knights, citizens, and burgesses returned to parliament for that part of the United Kingdom called England and Wales ought not to be diminished.'

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The ostensible question between General Gascoyne, and the minister was apparently a small one—viz., whether thirty-one members should or should not be cut off from the whole number of representatives. But the real question was, which was the stronger—the opposition or the government. The opposition had taken up a most favourable position, and counted with great confidence upon a large majority. This they now felt would bring matters to a crisis—by giving the king a fair excuse for dismissing the existing cabinet. The ministers had declared 'that the reduction of the English members was a vital and essential part of this measure;' what therefore was in its own nature comparatively unimportant, became of the utmost moment, as upon the result of the motion the fate of the bill and of the ministry actually depended. Lord John Russell said, 'The motion, if carried, would infallibly defeat the bill, and we should not be able to fill up the number of the House in the way intended, for it would prevent us from making those additions to the representation of Scotland and Ireland which we propose.' He then added what was the real reason for the stand made by ministers, 'But I know that this motion is only the first of a series which it is intended to bring forward with a view to defeat the bill.'[1] If the ministers were defeated and the king refused to dissolve the parliament, the measure of reform was lost; and the wishes of the

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1831, vol. ii. p. 1574.

people would be set at nought and their anger and disappointment recklessly braved. The debate with such consequences attendant on it called forth a third time the parliamentary forces of both sides of the House. More acrimony seemed to be thrown into the discussion the longer it continued, and now that a direct practical result was expected, all men were more eager and more excited. The division was taken on the 19th of April, when the numbers were—

For going into committee . .	291
Against it	299
Majority against ministers .	8[1]

The defeat made it necessary for the king to make up his mind respecting the dissolution; for the present House of Commons and the ministers could not exist together. The Civil List Bill passed the Lords on the 20th. But when, on the same day, ordnance estimates were moved in the House of Commons, the opposition determined at once to bring the existence of the ministry to an issue.

[1] One opinion upon this occasion excited no small surprise—viz., that of Sir Robert Wilson, who sat, as a most ardent reformer, for the borough of Southwark. He being seized with a sudden panic, declared, that he could not support ministers in their proposal to reduce the number of English members; and left it with his constituents to decide whether, under these circumstances, they desired to retain him as their representative; whereupon, to use Mr. Baring's phrase with relation to this incident, 'they sent him notice to quit.' His place was, at the general election which immediately followed, filled by Mr. W. Brougham, youngest brother of the Chancellor.

The House having resolved itself into a committee, and having agreed to certain resolutions granting money, those resolutions were ordered to be reported on the morrow. In the meantime, rumours had got abroad that a dissolution was at hand, and that so soon as the ordnance estimates should be finally passed, that event would occur. On the 21st, therefore, it was determined by the opposition to prevent the bringing up of the supplies, and they succeeded in their intention by raising a long and violent discussion nominally on the report of the Committee on the Liverpool Election. Mr. Benett, member for Wiltshire, moved 'That the system of corruption and treating which has prevailed at the elections of burgesses to serve in parliament for the borough of Liverpool deserves the attention of this House.' This appeared to have been a resolution passed by the committee, and Mr. Benett now asked the House to agree to it. Hereupon General Gascoyne rose in violent anger, denounced the corruption, made a personal attack on Mr. Benett, and thus succeeded in creating riot and confusion in the House itself. The excitement was so great, that it reached even the impassive mind of Sir Robert Peel, who joined, with no small degree of warmth, in the affray that was going on. He said it was clear that a dissolution was to take place, and that he should not have another opportunity in that parliament of expressing his opinion. He then blamed the ministers for not going on with their bill in an adverse House of

Commons, and for preferring to that course the risking all the terrible consequences that might follow a general election in the present excited state of the people. He dwelt upon the state of excitement in the public mind, and said, 'From the course which government has pursued, I feel a strong confidence that, with regard to Ireland, they would have asked from parliament a coercive measure, limited of course, but still investing them with more power than they possess.' He stated that not only would they be unable to do this, but that they would be deprived of the power which they now possessed of suppressing illegal associations, because the act giving them that power would expire with the parliament. He then quoted reasons assigned by Mr. Grey, in 1807, against a dissolution which, he said, were applicable to the present juncture, and inquired how Lord Grey could reconcile with these principles his present determination, and endeavoured, by warnings and threats of responsibility, to frighten the government out of their resolution. Hereupon, Mr. Stanley suggested that no dissolution had been spoken of by the ministers, and that on the subject mooted by the right honourable gentleman the lips of ministers were sealed. Mr. Brownlow taunted the opposition with attacking the royal prerogative, for which till now 'they so stiffly stickled.' This made matters still worse, and everybody became more excited and more angry. At length Mr. William Bankes, the member for Aldborough, moved the adjournment of the House, not of the

debate, and thus proposed to put a stop to all further proceedings on that day. Lord Althorp resisted this motion, and gave certain warnings of the consequence, well understood by those who heard him, which meant that, if the course proposed were pursued, the ordnance estimates would be stopped, as the dissolution was imminent, and that they who voted for the motion of adjournment voted in reality for stopping the supplies. The adjournment was carried nevertheless on the division by a majority of twenty-two; the numbers being—

For the adjournment	164
Against it	142
Majority	22

In the House of Lords the two nights of the 20th and 21st were equally stormy, with somewhat more of personal acrimony than was shown in the House of Commons. The bitterness of noble lords broke out in small things, and showed itself in unworthy insinuations, most of which was directed against the Lord Chancellor, whose appearance among them was far from welcome, and whose powers of debate annoyed as well as alarmed them. On all occasions they drew a broad and insulting distinction between him and Lord Grey, of whom they always spoke with the most guarded courtesy even whilst blaming his ministerial acts. But in the case of the Chancellor, the man and the minister were always confounded—and they sought to make him feel, that

though among them, he was not of them—and that his presence was a most unwelcome intrusion.

On the 20th a petition was presented by Lord King from Mr. Lawson, the printer of the *Times*, who had been committed for some observations in that paper reflecting on the Lords, which their lordships decided to be a false and scandalous libel. The petitioner expressed contrition and begged to be released. When this matter was first mooted by Lord Limerick, the Lord Chancellor very wisely advised their lordships not to notice the attacks made on them, not to become involved in a contest with the press, because, according to his experience in the House of Commons, in no case did they ever get into a contest of such a description as that now proposed without their afterwards repenting of it.[1] This prudent suggestion of the Chancellor, because it was his, was the signal for an immediate rising on the part of the opposition lords, to advise a totally contrary course. Lord Eldon gave his sanction as a legal authority to the declaration, that the observations in the *Times* were libellous and a breach of privilege, and declared that he should support the motion of Lord Limerick, which was, 'that Mr. Lawson, the printer of the *Times*, be ordered to attend at the bar.' Lord Haddington also supported the motion and darkly insinuated his suspicions as to the authorship of the observations made by the public press upon the queen's well-known hostility to the

1 *Mirror of Parliament*, 1831, vol. ii. p. 1482.

Reform Bill, and spoke of them as being 'clothed in that doubtful and mysterious language which practised and experienced writers well knew how to use.'[1] He was, in fact, angry because they were not libels. The Lord Chancellor seemed to think upon this statement that some similar declaration of indignation respecting these attacks was necessary on his part—whereupon he rose, and averred, that up to that moment he was ignorant that such observations had been made: but that now hearing of them, he was indignant likewise. Thus far the noble disputants had confined themselves to insinuations, the attack and the defence being equally maintained by inuendo—plain indeed to every one, but still within the bounds of courtesy. Lord Londonderry no sooner rose, than he stumbled over these frail barriers in the way of angry and unskilful debaters. He began by giving the world a very vivid conception of his idea of what constituted a libel on the peerage. He praised Lord Limerick, blamed the course proposed by the Lord Chancellor, and declared that the press was becoming perfectly intolerable. 'On former occasions a similar course has been pursued, and I say that the article now before your lordships calls upon you to adopt this course'—viz., that proposed by Lord Limerick.—'Noble lords in the libel before us, have been called 'things,' and I would put it to your lordships to say, whether it is pleasant for any noble lord to be called

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1831, vol. ii. p. 1484.

'a thing' in a public newspaper. This is not all, for not only have your lordships been called 'things,' but you are designated as 'things with human pretensions.' No person can hesitate to say that the calling of a peer of this House 'a thing,' and 'a thing with human pretensions,' is a libel and a breach of privilege.'

Thus having given his opinion as to the nature of the libel, the noble Marquis proceeded to point out the writer of it.

'My lords, I say this article means every peer in this House—I say that this sentence applies to all your lordships; but is the noble lord, is any person making a speech in your lordship's House to be called a thing with human pretensions? I declare, my lords, in my view of the case, it is one of the greatest outrages that ever was published. I would defy any man to read the paragraph and not direct it to the noble Earl. The noble and learned lord on the woolsack says, that if this is an outrage, it had better be taken no notice of—if it is an outrage—I declare, my lords, when I heard the noble and learned lord on the woolsack deliver himself in this case, I thought that the noble and learned lord was a writer in the paper himself.' After this decorous assertion, the noble Marquis wished to know why the attacks on the queen had not been submitted to the Attorney-General? The answer was, because they had not before this been known to the government. Lord Rolle then asked, if certain papers containing attacks

on the Archbishop of Canterbury, and which papers had been laid before Lord Grey, had been submitted to the Attorney-General? Lord Grey answered that they had, and that was all the answer he had to give.

On the 19th, Mr. Lawson was examined, and Lord Wynford then moved—'That John Joseph Lawson having admitted himself to be the printer of a false and scandalous libel, which had appeared in the *Times* newspaper of the 16th inst., be committed to Newgate during the pleasure of the House, *and that he also pay a fine of* 100*l.* *as a penalty for publishing the aforesaid libel.*'

This outrageous proposal at once roused up in opposition the Lord Chancellor, the Duke of Wellington, Marquis of Lansdowne, and Lord Grey. The motion was therefore amended, and Mr. Lawson was committed to the custody of the black rod, and ordered to attend on the next morning at ten. He did so, having first, through Lord King, presented his petition as above mentioned. And thereupon ensued a debate, which, considering the state of the public mind at that time, was calculated to do irreparable mischief to the House in which it occurred. Lord Londonderry again renewed his attacks on the Lord Chancellor, insinuating—if such broad statements could be called insinuation—that the Lord Chancellor was the author of the libel.

'I say, my lords, we must then proceed to discover and adequately to punish the individual who masks himself under the unfortunate man at the bar. I

would here observe, that if there are individuals connected together for the purpose of writing such offensive paragraphs in this or any other paper, I trust they will, if they have any feelings at all, sustain bitter pangs and reproaches within their minds when, on this occasion, they see your lordships inflict a punishment on their publisher and printer, who, perhaps, has been merely obliged to comply with the orders of his employers. I confess that, in this instance, when I saw the noble and learned lord on the woolsack—who, I thought, should have been the defender of your privileges, rather than a supporter of their infringers—when I saw him, I say, last night placing himself between the House and such an offender, for the purpose of shielding the latter, I really was almost disposed to believe that the noble and learned lord was acting as counsel for the defendant in this proceeding.'[1] This brought up the Chancellor, who demanded of the noble Marquis to drop vague insinuations, and come to charges. 'I never use,' said the Lord Chancellor, 'I never use insinuations, I always bring direct charges; I would rather have the noble lord's open hostility than his covert enmity. I am sure he is incapable of persisting in insinuations—the noble lord has too much honour and high-mindedness for that; therefore, as the noble lord has hinted at something, or nothing, I put myself upon my defence before your lordships; and I call on

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1831, vol. ii. p. 1579.

the noble Marquis to charge me with something.'[1] Hereupon Lord Londonderry shuffled—but quickly returned to his former mode and matter of insinuation, by harping upon the fact, that the real author of the libel was not Mr. Lawson—that Mr. Lawson was not the person deserving of punishment—and he declared that if the petition of the printer were brought up, he would on the next day move for a list of the proprietors of the *Times* deposited in the Stamp-office, in the hopes of being able to trace out the real authors of the paragraphs complained of. The Lord Chancellor replied upon this speech, which he declared to be the most extraordinary speech he had ever heard—and with successful and most biting sarcasm exposed the ignorance and insolence of the noble Marquis. But he then proceeded to discuss a much graver question than that involved in the authorship of the libel—and that was, what were the powers of the Lords to declare it a libel, and to punish the offence with fine and imprisonment? Lords Wynford, Eldon, and Tenterden all declared that the House had the power to find the person charged guilty of a libel, and to punish him with fine and imprisonment—and Lord Tenterden, giving his reasons for this opinion, exposed his flank to the Chancellor, who, with the ready skill of a long-practised debater, routed the whole learned phalanx, in consequence of this mistake on the part of the Chief-Justice. The words of Lord

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1831, vol. ii. p. 1579.

Tenterden on this most important subject, which thus exposed him to the fire of the Lord Chancellor, were these:—

'I must declare that I think the right of your lordships to the exercise of this privilege is clear, distinct, and indisputable. And why was this power conferred? It was conferred, my lords, not for the protection of those who possess it—not for the sake of the House of Lords—*not for the sake of the House of Commons*—not for the sake of the courts of law, *all of whom are in equal possession of the power*, but for the sake of the nation at large. * * * * These, my lords, are the reasons why the two Houses of parliament, and why courts of law, possess this power, these are the reasons why each of them ought to possess it; and I am quite sure that if they, and especially the two Houses of parliament, did not possess this power of vindicating themselves, it would be impossible that their respective duties could be performed with dignity to themselves, or with advantage to the country.'[1]

Marmont's false move at Salamanca was not a more flagrant mistake than this declaration on the part of Lord Tenterden—the Duke of Wellington's swoop down from the Arapiles was not more crushing and decisive than the triumphant and vehement reply of the Lord Chancellor.

The Lord Chancellor's original position was, that

1 *Mirror of Parliament*, 1831, vol. ii. p. 1582.

the possession of the power to fine and imprison for breach of privilege by the House of Lords was, in his opinion, very doubtful—that of the impolicy of exercising such power he had no doubt at all—and all this he set forth clearly, forcibly, and in a manner most calculated to produce an extraordinary effect upon the mind of the public out of doors. The Chief Justice at this moment introduced himself into the debate to diminish this effect, and to shield his friend, Lord Wynford, who had first proposed this reckless, unjust, and most impolitic proceeding—he (the Chief Justice) asserted in the terms above stated, that *both* Houses of parliament had this same power, and that without it they could not legislate for the country. Now, it is notorious to every tyro in the law of parliament, that the House of Commons has not the power. Whatever doubt any one may feel as regards the Lords, there is none in the mind of any one who is competent to give an opinion, as to the power of the House of Commons—that House *cannot fine*, and cannot imprison for a time certain. The Lord Chief Justice utterly destroyed the authority and worth of his opinion, by thus basing it upon a statement utterly erroneous in point of law, and clearly disproved as matter of fact by the experience of every day. But the world out of doors were deeply moved by the whole proceeding. They trembled to think what might be their fate if again a corrupt, irresponsible, and arbitrary House of Commons should be leagued with the Lords against the people, to whom the refuge

of the courts of law would no longer exist. The scene of that night incited the many-headed press to still farther exertions, by clearly showing that its destruction would assuredly be the consequence of defeat upon this now vital question of reform. Mr. Lawson was on the next day reprimanded and released.

This extraordinary scene but too plainly proved the anger and violent excitement of the noble lords in opposition—any increase of such feelings seemed impossible—but still an increase thereof was at once perceived, when they learned that the conduct of the Commons had not induced the king to refuse his assent to the dissolution, and to dismiss his present ministers. On the 21st, Lord Wharncliffe asked Lord Grey, without any circumlocution, whether ministers had advised a dissolution, and whether such a course had been resolved on. Lord Grey really admitted that such was the fact, by declaring that the question was one of a very unusual nature, and that Lord Wharncliffe could not have expected an answer. Lord Wharncliffe hereupon gave notice that he would, on the morrow, move an humble address to the king, praying that his Majesty would be graciously pleased not to exercise his undoubted prerogative of dissolving parliament.

After this, Mr. Lawson was brought in, reprimanded, and discharged. Then a question arose as to some formality connected with the Civil List Bill; it being asserted by Lord Wharncliffe that the king's assent, which he said was necessary, had not been

given before such bill was brought into the Commons. The ministers, Lord Grey being absent, seemed to allow that some irregularity had occurred, and referred the question of irregularity over to the next day.

But between this adjournment of the Lords and their meeting next day, many events of great importance occurred, and the result was, that the opposition were defeated in their project of checking the onward course of the ministry by means of technical objection, and of difficulties arising out of mere technical errors. The opposition hoped and believed that the adjournment of the House of Commons on Thursday, by delaying the estimates, had delayed also the possibility of a dissolution, and had thus given to the House of Lords time to pass the proposed address of Lord Wharncliffe against the project of dissolution itself, which from the wavering state of the king's mind, they still expected to avert. On the morning however of the 22nd, Lord Grey and the Lord Chancellor waited on the king, in order to request that he would instantly, and on that day, dissolve the House. The whole scene of this interview of the king and his ministers as related by those who could alone describe it, is a curious illustration of the way in which the great interests of mankind often seem to depend on petty incidents, and in which ludicrous puerilities often mix themselves up with events most important to the welfare of whole nations. The necessity of a dissolution had long been foreseen, and

decided on by the ministers—but the king had not yet been persuaded to consent to so bold a measure—and now the two chiefs of the administration were about to intrude themselves into the royal closet, not only to advise and ask for a dissolution, but to request the king on the sudden—on this very day, and within a few hours to go down and put an end to his parliament in the midst of the session, and with all the ordinary business of the session yet unfinished. The bolder mind of the Chancellor took the lead, and Lord Grey anxiously solicited him to *manage* the king on the occasion. So soon as they were admitted, the Chancellor, with some care and circumlocution, propounded to the king the object of the interview they had sought. The startled monarch no sooner understood the drift of the Chancellor's somewhat periphrastic statement than he exclaimed in wonder and anger against the very idea of such a proceeding. 'How is it possible, my lords, that I can after this fashion repay the kindness of parliament to the queen and myself. They have just granted me a most liberal civil list, and to the queen a splendid annuity in case she survives me.' The Chancellor confessed that they had, as regarded his Majesty, been a liberal and wise parliament, but said that nevertheless their further existence was incompatible with the peace and safety of the kingdom. Both he and Lord Grey then strenuously insisted upon the absolute necessity of their request, and gave his Majesty to understand, that this advice was by his ministers unanimously

resolved on—and that they felt themselves unable to conduct the affairs of the country in the present condition of the parliament. This last statement made the king feel that a general resignation would be the consequence of a further refusal; of this, in spite of his secret wishes, he was at the moment really afraid, and therefore he, by employing petty excuses, and suggesting small and temporary difficulties, soon began to show that he was about to yield. 'But, my lords, nothing is prepared—the great officers of state are not summoned.' 'Pardon me, Sir,' said the Chancellor, bowing with profound apparent humility, 'we have taken the great liberty of giving them to understand that your Majesty commanded their attendance at the proper hour.' 'But, my lords, the crown, and the robes, and other things needed are not prepared.' 'Again I most humbly entreat your Majesty's pardon for my boldness,' said the Chancellor,—'they are all prepared and ready—the proper officers being desired to attend in proper form and time.' 'But, my lords,' said the king, reiterating the form in which he put his objection,—'you know the thing is wholly impossible; the guards, the troops, have had no orders, and cannot be ready in time.' This objection was in reality the most formidable one. The orders to the troops on such occasions emanate always directly from the king, and no person but the king can in truth command them for such service—and as the Prime Minister and daring Chancellor well knew the nature of royal susceptibility on such matters, they

were in no slight degree doubtful and anxious as to the result. The Chancellor, therefore, with some real hesitation, began again as before, 'Pardon me, Sir; we know how bold the step is, that, presuming on your great goodness, and your anxious desire for the safety of your kingdom, and happiness of your people, we have presumed to take—I have given orders and the troops are ready.' The king started in serious anger, flamed red in the face, and burst forth with, 'What, my lords, have you dared to act thus? Such a thing was never heard of. You, my Lord Chancellor, ought to know, that such an act is treason, high treason, my lord.' 'Yes, Sir,' said the Chancellor, 'I do know it—and nothing but my thorough knowledge of your Majesty's goodness, of your paternal anxiety for the good of your people, and my own solemn belief that the safety of the state depends upon this day's proceedings, could have emboldened me to the performance of so unusual, and in ordinary circumstances, so improper a proceeding. In all humility I submit myself to your Majesty, and am ready in my own person to bear all the blame and receive all the punishment which your Majesty may deem needful, but I again entreat your Majesty to listen to us and to follow our counsel—and as you value the security of your crown, and the peace of your realms, to yield to our most earnest solicitations.' After some further expostulations by both his ministers the king cooled down and consented. Having consented, he became anxious that everything

should be done in the proper manner, and gave minute directions respecting the ceremonial. The speech to be spoken by him at the prorogation was ready prepared and in the Chancellor's pocket. To this he agreed — desired that everybody might punctually attend, and dismissed his ministers for the moment with something between a menace and a joke, upon the audacity of their proceeding.

The Chancellor sat that morning in appeals, and coming to the end of his list of causes, retired, in order, if possible, to prevent any debate arising. The opposition understood this manœuvre, and Lord Mansfield moved that Lord Shaftesbury take the chair *pro tempore*. Lord Wharncliffe then rose, when the Duke of Richmond rose to order: the evident purpose of the interruption being if possible to prevent the House coming to a resolution on the subject of Lord Wharncliffe's proposed motion.

'I rise to order,' said the noble Duke. 'Noble lords are not in their places, and I beg to move that the Standing Order No. 1 be read, which renders it necessary that noble lords should sit in their proper places. I rise to suggest this because I see a noble Earl sitting next to one of the junior barons of the House.'

Lord Londonderry started up, crying, 'I rise to order.' Lord Clanricarde did the same, and Lord Wharncliffe at the same moment appealed to the House on the subject of so extraordinary an interruption. In short, the House of Peers at that moment was a scene of unexampled confusion; Lord Lynd-

hurst attacked the Duke of Richmond, declaring the course adopted by him to be most uncalled for. The Duke retorted by stating, that if such were the tone employed on the occasion, he would persist in moving that the Standing Order No. 1 be read, and further, that the order also should be read which forbids the use of intemperate and offensive language in that House—and threatened if these were not complied with, he would urge another—because he saw persons not peers in the House. Lord Londonderry here broke out in a violent rage and angry gesticulation: 'I rise to order,' he exclaimed, 'and I challenge the noble lord opposite (meaning the Duke of Richmond) to point out any offensive language used by the noble Baron (Lord Lyndhurst), because I maintain that none has been adopted by him.' It was now Lord Clanricarde's turn—and he complained that Lord Londonderry was out of order in attributing to the Duke of Richmond the terms offensive language as applying to the remark of Lord Lyndhurst. The noble Duke had stated that it might be necessary to read the Standing Order against such language. Lord Londonderry retorted, by again calling upon the Duke to state the offensive language. 'If the noble Duke,' he said, 'thinks he is to be the hero of this *coup-d'état*, or if he supposes, by the stratagem he has adopted, that he can prevent noble lords from expressing their sentiments on the occasion of this most extraordinary meeting, or if he seeks to stop the rights of the peers of this House, I tell him he is mis-

taken; and I pity the man who could resort to such miserable shifts.' The noble lord seemed wholly unaware that by all this noise and strife, he was really playing the game of the opposite party, and enabling them to do just what he was declaring they should not do. The more wary, cool-headed nobleman who was born in Yorkshire, Lord Wharncliffe, saw this, and having got into his proper place, began to address the House upon the motion of which he had given notice. But the precious time had passed. The Lord Chancellor suddenly resumed the woolsack, and broke the thread of the noble Baron's discourse, by observing,

'I never until now have heard that the sovereign has not the right to dissolve his parliament when he sees fit to do so, more particularly when the House of Commons have considered it proper to take the extreme and unprecedented step of refusing supplies to his Majesty.'[1]

[1] This assertion, that the House of Commons had stopped the supplies, passed with the reforming party at the time, and was accepted as true; but it is difficult to understand the accusation at the present moment. Sir James Graham explained the statement in the next parliament thus: 'Mr. Bankes proposed to adjourn the House and not the debate; this put an end to business for that night. He was warned by inuendo by Lord Althorp, that if he did so the ordnance estimates would not pass; and everybody understood what this meant,' 'which was, that the House would be prorogued on the morrow; but in spite of this warning, Mr. Bankes persevered; the House acquiesced, and was prorogued, and so the estimates did not pass.' The one party wished to have time for the Lords to pass their threatened resolution; the other, the ministerial, wished to

The fury of Lord Londonderry could be no longer restrained, and he exclaimed,

'I protest, my Lords, I will not submit to'— . . Further than this his speech did not proceed, as the Chancellor, who heard the king approaching, clutched the seals, suddenly left the woolsack and darted out of the House..

Lord Londonderry, not yet despairing, moved Lord Shaftesbury again to act as speaker, and Lord Mansfield began a furious harangue, in a loud and angry voice. In the meantime the Lord Chancellor met the king entering the House, and proceeded in procession to the robing-room. As the king advanced, the noise in the House became distinctly audible. 'What's that, my Lord Chancellor?' said the king. 'Only, may it please you, Sir, the House of Lords amusing themselves while awaiting your Majesty's coming.' The king knowing what was meant hastily robed,[1]

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prevent this; and had determined on prorogation. The Tories fancied that this was impossible if the estimates were not passed. But there was no stopping of the supplies intended.

[1] There were many ridiculous stories set afloat respecting these proceedings (see *Quarterly Review*, vol. xlv. p. 517). The reformers, with the ministry at their head, wished the world to believe that the king was warmly in favour of reform, and a story was circulated that the king had said he would go to prorogue parliament in a hackney coach if the state coach was not ready; and that when robing and preparing to go into the House of Lords, on putting on the crown, he said, 'Aye, this is my coronation.' The Tories, on the other hand, were not unwilling to make grievances of these sayings and doings, it not being according to etiquette (as it was said,) for the king to wear the crown before the coronation. Both stories are fables.

and as hastily entered the House—cutting short Lord Mansfield's speech, and putting an end to all chance of passing the resolution of Lord Wharncliffe. The king ascended the throne, and commanded the attendance of the Commons.

Sir Thomas Tyrwhitt, the Usher of the Black Rod, proceeding to the House of Commons, found there a scene of equal anger, if not of equal turbulence and disorder, to that which he had just left.

The House of Commons had met early, as it was now well known that a dissolution would take place. On the presentation of a petition in favour of reform, Sir Richard Vyvyan took occasion to arraign his Majesty's ministers in a long and by no means effective speech. A cry of question arose, and Sir Richard insisted that the real question before the House was whether they were to be dissolved or not. Here Sir Francis Burdett rose to order, and denied the right of the member for Cornwall to speak to that question. The Speaker declared Sir Richard Vyvyan quite in order, when Mr. Tennyson did, what is seldom known to occur in the House of Commons,—that is, disputed the propriety of the Speaker's decision, and again appealed to the Chair as to the relevancy of the observations made by Sir Richard to the question before the House, which was that the petition from Woolwich should be read. The Speaker, thus appealed to again, decided that Sir Richard was in order. Mr. Tennyson again rose, and rising was called loudly to order by the members of the opposition. He asserted that

it was disorderly and unconstitutional for any member, be he who he may, to state that the question before the House of Commons was, whether the House should be dissolved or not. Sir Richard, however, persisted —and remarked upon the unprecedented proceeding of any member in that House disputing the decision of the Chair. Hereupon Lord John Russell rose to complain that any member should be blamed for so doing, denying that the decision of the Chair was necessarily imperative on the House. Sir Richard proceeded—when as he spoke the noise of the guns announcing his Majesty's approach was distinctly heard in the House, and called forth the loud and triumphant cheers of the ministerial side. Sir Robert Peel and Sir F. Burdett both rose at the same time to order. The Speaker called on Sir Robert Peel. Whereupon the Chancellor of the Exchequer moved, as he had undoubtedly the right to do, that Sir F. Burdett do now speak. Sir Robert started up and said, 'Sir, I speak to that motion.' Hereupon cries of 'Sir Robert Peel,' 'Sir Robert Peel,' were answered by counter cries of 'Sir Francis Burdett,' 'Sir Francis Burdett,' and some wiser cries of 'Chair, chair.' The Speaker rose, and stilled this unprecedented storm—rebuked those who had disputed his authority, and again called on Sir Robert Peel, who proceeded thereupon in undisguised anger to address the House;—but as the noise of the cannon boomed into the House, the reform members loudly cheered—each discharge being greeted with overbearing and triumphant shouts. But suddenly Sir

Robert's angry speech, and the loud cheers of the reformers, were stilled by the three admonitory taps of the Usher of the Black Rod, who came to summon the House to attend his Majesty in the House of Peers. The Speaker at once rose and obeyed, the House of Commons following. The bar of the House of Lords was thronged by the mass of members who now entered. The Speaker addressed the king, stating that the House of Commons approached the king with profound respect, and that the Commons had at no time more faithfully responded to the real feelings and interests of his Majesty's affectionate people; 'while it has been,' he added, 'their earnest desire to support the dignity and honour of the Crown, upon which depend the greatness, the happiness, and the prosperity of this country.'

The royal assent being given to the bills that had passed—and among others to the Civil List Bill—the Chancellor presented to his Majesty the speech he was to deliver—and the king, with the high shrill tone he always employed, but with more than wonted energy, read the first, which indeed was the really important paragraph of the speech, and that which alone men cared to listen to or hear.

'My lords and gentlemen,' said his Majesty, 'I have come to meet you for the purpose of proroguing this parliament, *with a view to its instant dissolution.*'

The voice of the king rose, and became still more shrill and piercing, as he reached the last clause of the sentence—and a loud buzz and hum, the loudest such

a presence permitted, immediately arose, and nearly drowned all the succeeding sentences.

The dissolution immediately followed the prorogation, and a new parliament was summoned to meet on the 14th of June.

The only really important act of this parliament was the Civil List Act, passed the last day of its existence. This bill was introduced on the 29th of March by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when he declared that their Majesties relinquished the annuities granted to them as Duke and Duchess of Clarence. On the 21st of the same month, the committee which had been appointed on the motion of Sir Henry Parnell (upon which occurred the ministerial defeat of the Duke of Wellington), reported upon the civil list, and proposed a reduction of nearly 12,000*l.* This proposed reduction was chiefly in the expenses of the several departments of the Lord Steward, Lord Chamberlain, Master of the Horse, and Master of the Robes. There was also a small sum proposed to be deducted from the bounty and alms fund, and secret service. This report gave great offence to the king, who insisted upon having from the Lord Chancellor, and the law officers, an opinion as to the power of the committee to make such a proposal—and his importunity and anger induced the ministers to reject the proposition of the committee, and to insert in their bill of supply the original sum of 510,000*l.*, in place of 498,480*l.*, as suggested by the committee. The House, at the time, were not aware of the secret history

of these proceedings, or of the pressure that was actually upon the ministers. One argument used by the king alarmed the ministers, because it affected the proposed measure of reform. 'If,' said the king, 'the people, according to the new bill, are really to govern the House of Commons, and the House of Commons is to decide upon the amount of the salary I am to give my servants, then the prerogatives of the Crown will in reality pass to the people, and the monarchy cannot exist.' This dexterous thrust of the king—or rather of the king's secret councillor, or councillors, decided the ministers. Rather than run the risk which would follow upon angering the king, they proposed the undiminished sum, and carried their proposal in spite of Mr. Hume's wish that they should concur with the suggestion of the committee.

CHAPTER II.

FROM THE DISSOLUTION OF THE PARLIAMENT IN APRIL (22ND) TO THE DEFEAT OF THE SECOND REFORM BILL IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS.

THE dissolution had been for some time expected by the people; and they were consequently prepared to act so soon as it occurred. In every place which had the right of returning members, a reform committee was organized. In London large sums were subscribed, and were placed in the hands of a number of persons of high character and well known, in order that the reform candidates might be effectually assisted where money was wanted. Another society which, by its very existence, gave great offence to the Tory party, was also constituted, and called the 'Parliamentary Candidate Society,' which professed not, indeed, to provide candidates, but to supply information respecting all persons who appeared in that character—giving, if they had been previously in parliament, epitomes of their speeches, lists of their votes, and generally a history of their parliamentary career. If they were new candidates, and as yet unknown to the public, all the information respecting their opinions and connexions that could be discovered

was forwarded to the constituency to which they presented themselves. This was called dictation, and the society was denounced in parliament, before the dissolution, as a grievous attack upon the independence of the electors, and an outcry made about it as if it was a fearful and ominous sign of revolutionary times; whereas it did neither good nor harm—never, probably, influenced a vote—never certainly had the least effect upon any election; but only served to keep up excitement, and induce the persons engaged in it to believe that they were doing something, because they seemed to themselves to be very busy.

The ministers, however, had formidable means at their disposal. The Whig party subscribed largely. The Whig borough proprietors used all their influence to return members pledged to vote for the bill—the whole bill—and nothing but the bill. In towns where they had property, they sternly insisted that their dependents should support ministerial candidates; and in every case where the member for a Whig nomination borough had voted against the ministers, he was set aside and his place supplied by some more pliant nominee. The enthusiasm in favour of the ministerial measure now pervaded all classes of society, and the public feeling became so strong, that the anti-ministerial candidates were not only generally the unpopular candidates, but were not seldom exposed to great annoyance, if not also to great personal danger. Up to this period, there was no organized intimidation, no direct illegal threatening employed by the people. The effect of unpopu-

larity was great, and many timid persons, doubtless, gave their votes under the influence of fear. But the proceedings of the reforming party were clearly yet within the strict letter of the law. I do not mean to deny that, in many places, there was great violence and open rioting. But as yet, the party kept within the law, and adopted no openly revolutionary measures. We shall see, however, hereafter that the popular efforts were not confined to these legal limits, but became the threatening commencements of undisguised revolution.

The king clearly by his prorogative was entitled, if he pleased, to dissolve the parliament;—the ministers as clearly on their responsibility could advise his doing so;—and the appeal to the people in such a case was in accordance with the strict principles and the very letter of the constitution. The *forms* of the law, too, were obeyed; and though some hot-headed and eager people might use threatening language, and declare that, if the bill were not passed, violent measures would be adopted, the nation believed that the bill would be obtained in a legal and regular manner; and that this change or reform of our institutions, so ardently desired, would be the result of the inherent curative force of the institutions themselves —*revolution*, in short, was not desired, was not as yet thought of by the people. That word was employed hitherto only by the Tory party, who would insist upon every step, legal, and in accordance with the most common forms of the constitution, being part

and parcel of a direful scheme of revolution and convulsion and overthrow to which all our institutions, private property among the number, were inevitably doomed. The people were, however, as yet generally in good humour. They believed that success was certain, and therefore laughed at the prophecies of their opponents, as the result of selfish interests, or of old womanly fears.

The king, indeed, had been persuaded to dissolve parliament by the mixed influences of flattery and alarm. He was flattered by being told that he was exceedingly popular and beloved, because he favoured reform. He was alarmed by dark insinuations as to the mischief and the danger attendant upon refusing or even delaying the fulfilment of the people's wishes. The ministers, indeed, and their friends appeared to frown upon all violence; but they well knew that the king, unless alarmed, would not dissolve the parliament, but *would* dissolve the cabinet. They also knew that, supposing a dissolution to be granted by the king, every effort would still be needed;—that all the influences of enthusiasm, alarm, hope, must be brought to bear on the constituencies, in order to obtain the requisite majority;—that some would be induced to vote from a belief in the positive benefits to be derived from the proposed measure; some from the expectation of personal advantage; some from the fear of the consequences resulting from refusal; and to the production of this *wholesome* fear they knew right well, that a little outbreak of violence from time to time

would most efficiently contribute. They, therefore, while blaming every instance of actual violence, never failed to seize on these cases of outrage, in order to use them as illustrations of the danger of resistance on the part of the king, or the opponents of reform.

The industry and excitement of the liberal reformers were eminently successful; the Tory party being signally defeated throughout the country, and a large majority of members returned pledged to support the bill of the ministers. The most remarkable effect of the enthusiasm then prevalent was that evinced by the returns from the counties—a majority of the members thence returned being strongly in favour of the ministerial bill. This result the Tory party took great pains to deny or explain away, because it clearly showed that the constituencies, composed of the partisans of the landed interest—that interest which the Tories always affect to call and deal with as their own, did not in their estimation of the intended change differ from the town or mercantile population. The Tory party and press, with the *Quarterly Review* at their head, warmly vociferated that a revolution had come unawares upon the land. —But vainly they shouted 'the ends of the world are come among us'[1]—vainly they insisted that we were a ruined nation—that the revolution of 1831 was about to surpass in horrors the revolution of 1640, and of 1789; vainly they proved point by point, that in

[1] Vide *Quarterly Review.*

all things those dreadful convulsions resembled that through which England was now passing! The people—all ranks and interests thereof—turned a deaf ear to these terrible denunciations, and sent a large majority of members representing counties, cities, towns, and boroughs pledged to support, in its entirety, the very measure which was to produce all these horrible consequences.

The parliament met on the appointed day, and again Mr. Manners Sutton was unanimously chosen Speaker.[1] On the 21st, the king in person began the real business of the session by a speech from the throne, the beginning and the end of which were of the highest importance—the first paragraph relating to the Reform Bill, the last to Ireland.

'Having had recourse,' said the king, 'to that measure (i. e., the dissolution) for the purpose of ascertaining the sense of my people on the expediency of a reform in the representation, I have now to recommend that important question to your earliest and most attentive consideration, confident that in any measures which you may prepare for its adjustment,

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[1] Mr. C. Wynn, who had, fourteen years before, been a candidate for the office of Speaker, in competition with Mr. Manners Sutton, now proposed him. Sundry events at the close of the last parliament had put the ministers out of humour with Mr. Sutton, and there was an expectation that they would now evince their anger by proposing some other person as Speaker; but such a course was not deemed prudent. To risk the chance of increasing ill will and opposition to the Reform Bill by means of a personal dispute, was thought impolitic.

you will carefully adhere to the acknowledged principles of the constitution, by which the rights of the Crown, the authority of both Houses of parliament, and the rights and liberties of the people are equally secured.'

He then gave the usual assurance of the friendly disposition of all foreign powers—and spoke of his hope that, notwithstanding the civil commotions existing in various parts of Europe, and the contest going on in Poland, general peace would be maintained.

He next spoke of Belgium, stating that the questions connected with the settlement of its affairs were not yet decided; but that a most complete agreement continued between the powers whose plenipotentiaries were engaged in conference upon that subject in London. The principle upon which those conferences had been conducted was stated to be, not to interfere with the right of the people of Belgium to regulate their own internal affairs, and to establish their government according to their views of what was most conducive to their own welfare—with the sole condition, however, that in the exercise of this undoubted right, the security of neighbouring states should not be endangered.

The next paragraph related to Portugal, and lamented that diplomatic relations with its government could not be re-established, though a fleet had been sent peremptorily to enforce our demands of satisfaction.

The estimates were then spoken of, and, after the customary form, economy was recommended.

The king then proceeded to state that the reduction of taxes had not led to a proportionate decrease of revenue; but as a deficiency had arisen, a supply was asked. After dwelling upon his desire to assist the industry of the country by legislating on sound principles, the king described the appearance and the progress of the cholera, and the precautions that had been taken to prevent its introduction into this country.

The remaining paragraphs related to Ireland. The first stated that great distress existed there, and that the most pressing cases had been relieved by means immediately available, but necessarily of a temporary nature, and invited parliament to consider whether any and what means could be taken to assist the country, in order to prevent a recurrence of like evils.

In the next paragraph it was said that local disturbances *unconnected with political causes* had taken place in various parts of Ireland, more especially in Clare, Roscommon, and Galway, for the repression of which the constitutional authority of the law had been vigorously and successfully applied—and that by this the necessity of enacting new laws to strengthen the executive government, by giving it further powers, would, as the king said, 'I trust be prevented.'

'To avert such a necessity has been, and ever will be, my most earnest desire; but if it should arise, I do not doubt your firm resolution to maintain the peace and order of society by the adoption of such

measures as may be required for their more effectual protection.'

The debate upon the address in answer to a speech worded so as to avoid all difference of opinion was almost of necessity unimportant—and is of no historical interest, except that under the appearance of great calm candour and unanimity, there broke forth very significant proofs of the passion and violence that really lurked under this thin disguise of decorous and deliberate discussion.[1] In the Lords, the person against whom these shafts of anger were directed was, as usual, the Lord Chancellor. His conduct during the last hours of the last parliament was the subject of much petulant criticism—and some error of form in moving the address was seized upon with great

[1] Lord Grey's sarcastic observation upon their lordship's discussion of the speech was deserved. Lord Aberdeen, on the 24th of June, brought our foreign policy as a subject of discussion before the House, excusing himself for not doing so when the address was moved; upon which Lord Grey observed: 'I do not complain that the noble lord should not have taken an earlier opportunity of entering into this discussion; but, as the noble Earl states that he deferred it from the first night in consequence of the higher interest which existed with respect to matters of great domestic importance, I must observe, that giving to one of the matters which formed the chief subject of discussion, on the first night of the session, all the high importance it deserved, it appears to me that the House would have consulted its dignity quite as much in discussing matters of foreign policy, as in occupying itself in debates on illuminations, broken windows, the addresses of members of parliament to their constituents, or toasts given at public dinners; all of which, your lordships will recollect, were then introduced as subjects of comment, and occupied some portion of your time.'

avidity, in the hope of exposing the official ignorance of the learned lord and the ministry to which he belonged—as also the slovenly mode in which they conducted the business of parliament. Though there were really many topics for discussion in the speech, and assertions made much at variance with the opinions and belief as to matters of fact on the part of the opposition, they determined in the Lords as well as the Commons to abstain from moving an amendment. Such a course was probably a prudent forbearance—for though a majority would have supported them in the House of Lords, in the Commons signal defeat would have followed such an attempt, and thus at the outset of the session and of the parliament a collision would have occurred between the two Houses—which the moderate and reasonable people out of doors would have blamed, and attributed entirely to the factious violence of the opposition.

The only subject upon which the discussion threw any light was the late dissolution, which, as it had produced a House of Commons adverse to the opposition, was naturally the object of their most vehement indignation. They declared the dissolution itself to be, if not an unconstitutional, yet, considering the existing violent popular excitement, a most impolitic proceeding—and asserted that, occurring as it did in the middle of a session, it bore the appearance of a revolutionary *coup-d'état*, rather than of a calm and deliberate exercise of an acknowledged prerogative. They said, moreover, that the statements made by the

Lord Chancellor and others of the ministry, in justification of the dissolution, were wholly unfounded; that when the learned lord said the House of Commons had stopped the supplies, he stated that which was untrue; and they further insisted that the conduct of the House of Commons on that evening, even supposing they had stopped the supplies, was not, as the Lord Chancellor had alleged, the cause of the dissolution: the cabinet having already resolved, and before the evening of Thursday on which this so much complained of conduct occurred, to dissolve the parliament, in which they could not command a majority.

This they said was proved as a matter of fact, by a letter written by Lord Althorp on Thursday morning to one of his constituents, which letter stated that the dissolution was decided on, and would take place immediately. The assertions of the Chancellor, they said, though thus shown to be clearly untrue, had produced nevertheless great evils to the opposition party in the elections, as their candidates were constantly taunted with having factiously stopped the supplies, and were consequently subjected to the most unmerited odium and obloquy. 'Much, however, was made of this vote,' said Mr. Dawson, 'for election purposes; it was bandied about in every direction, and everywhere I found it impossible to do away with the impressions that had been made by addresses of this kind.'[1] The address here specifically alluded to, was

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1831, Sess. 2, vol. i. p. 53.

that of Sir James Graham, in which he had said, 'the last division, which had the effect of delaying the supplies, left no alternative but that of abandoning the bill, or of appealing to the people.' The justification of this assertion was thus given by Sir James Graham himself, in his answer to Mr. Dawson—'I will now state, then, the precise circumstances on which I rest my defence. The vote which had the effect of delaying the ordnance estimates was conclusive in the minds of the ministers of the necessity of dissolving parliament; but on Thursday there was held to be an insuperable bar to its taking place—viz., the want of an appropriation act for the ordnance estimates. On the Friday morning, however, it was discovered that there was a surplus from the ordnance estimates of the preceding year, which enabled ministers strictly to follow the precedents of 1804 and 1807, when a similar circumstance occurred. The army and navy have been supplied from money voted and appropriated by this House, and the ordnance by the surplus of that year discovered to exist on the Friday. There was then a general intention of dissolving parliament on the Thursday; and the vote of that night convinced ministers that they should betray their duty did they hesitate twenty-four hours longer upon doing it, and the discovery of the surplus I have mentioned enabled them to do it with comparatively no inconvenience.'[1] The Lord Chancellor in the Lords

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1831, Sess. 2, vol. i. p. 55.

gave very nearly the same explanation of the phrase he had made use of on the day of the dissolution. That measure had, he allowed, been decided by the ministers before Thursday night—but the vote of the Commons hastened and justified it. Not only had the ministers decided upon the measure, but the requisite commission for the purpose was actually prepared on the Thursday—and, said the Chancellor, 'knowing this, I must have been the veriest dolt and idiot in the creation, if I had said what has been attributed to me.' He then described what he did say —'I stated a fact, which I defy any of those three noble persons to contradict—I stated that the dissolution being resolved upon, if there were wanting any justification—this was my meaning, and the plain sense of the words—for the step which his Majesty had been advised to take, the conduct of the House of Commons the night before furnished ample justification for that proceeding.'[1]

The truth is, the whole was a piece of parliamentary strategy, in which the opposition were worsted. They hoped by their vote to prevent the dissolution. They desired delay—as well on account of Lord Wharncliffe's motion, as for the chance of the king's ousting the ministry. Lord Stormont, with the frankness which indiscretion supplies, acknowledged this when he said, 'I have no hesitation in declaring that I was conscious when I gave that vote, that I

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1831, Sess. 2, vol. i. p. 29.

was stopping the business of the House;' and when he asked 'whether the motion of Lord Wharncliffe in the House of Lords was not the reason for the dissolution,' he explained why he and his party desired delay. Sir Robert Peel, who was far too practised a debater and too wary a politician to state openly his real cause of complaint, blamed the dissolution, and the various incidents and statements with which it was accompanied, because they all tended to create in the people a dangerous excitement. His unwary friends and followers betrayed the reason why they disliked the excitement of which he complained—it conduced to the election of members favourable to the ministers and their bill. Their anger now plainly proved that they had been defeated, and that a majority of the electors, even of the unreformed constituencies, had declared themselves in favour of the proposed reform, as a rational adaptation of our constitution to those changes which time inevitably produces in all human institutions.[1]

[1] Every little incident connected with the dissolution and the elections was seized upon in both Houses, and made matter of grave complaint. The exhibition of personal spite was really contemptible, because it was evidence only of angry impotence. Lord Howick listened to a toast which the decorous Tories thought revolutionary—'The people, the source of all legitimate power;' the Lord Chancellor had 'flounced' out of the House of Lords; Lord Londonderry's windows were broken during an illumination, and some heads in sundry election squabbles. And noble lords and grave statesmen could find no better theme of discourse than these trivialities, when the political constitution of a great people was about to be remodelled.

The gravest complaint, however, brought against the ministers, and which indeed alone seemed to require any answer, related to Mr. O'Conuell and the prosecution to which he had been subjected. The ministers were openly charged with having made a 'corrupt compromise' with the learned gentleman, which they did, as their opponents asserted, to gain Mr. O'Connell's influence in the elections. He was to aid them, and they were to relieve him from the consequences of conviction. Mr. Stanley and Lord Plunkett both vehemently denied this assertion, and explained how it was that Mr. O'Connell had escaped after his conviction. Both asserted, that as the act upon which the conviction had been obtained expired with the parliament, the conviction expired too, and that under it Mr. O'Connell could not be brought up for judgment. This Lord Plunkett said was the opinion of the law-officers of the Crown in Ireland, and his own, after careful consideration. Mr. Stanley was, as usual, fierce in his denial, and in his manner contemptuous to Mr. O'Connell, when explaining the course which the proceedings had taken. 'I will go further than saying that there was no collusion. I will say that not only was there no collusion or compromise, but that I should have been most glad if Mr. O'Connell could have been brought up for judgment. This, however, was found to be impossible.'[1] He then stated, that not being content with their own opinions,

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1831, Sess. 2, vol. i. p. 57.

the Irish law-officers had referred the question to the Attorney and Solicitor General for England, who had come to the same opinion—and that thereupon the Attorney-General for Ireland gave notice to the opposite party that the prosecution was abandoned.[1] 'But then,' continued Mr. Stanley, and this statement was long remembered and never forgiven—'but then we have been told that we ought not to have dissolved parliament, because by so doing Mr. O'Connell had escaped. Now no man can be more sensible than I am of the importance of showing to the people of Ireland, that if Mr. O'Connell chooses to go beyond the law, he is not above the law; but without meaning the slightest disrespect to Mr. O'Connell, I must say, that if I put on the one hand the success of a great and important measure like the Reform Bill, and on the other hand, the confinement of Mr. O'Connell in his Majesty's jail of Kilmainham, for three, or six, or nine months, I must say, that what became of Mr. O'Connell was as dust in the balance. Besides, the impression of the supremacy of the law was made upon the people, by the fact of the verdict having been ob-

[1] This question *was* discussed in the cabinet, and this very circumstance was adduced by Lord Grey himself, as one reason for not dissolving parliament, so highly did he appreciate the advantage to be derived from convincing the Irish people that Mr. O'Connell was not above the law. Mr. Stanley was by no means pleased that he should escape, and Lord Grey feared the ill-humour of Mr. Stanley in consequence. However, it was clear the Whig ministry and the House of Commons, as then constituted, could not co-exist, and the dissolution followed.

tained against him, and an immediate change was wrought in the system of agitation, which indeed ceased. Such being the case, the question of what might be the personal consequences to any individual by the dissolution, became of still less importance than it was before.' This contemptuous expression of indifference gave serious offence to Mr. O'Connell. His vanity was wounded in its most sensitive part. Mr. Stanley knew well, when he launched this barbed and poisoned shaft, the pain he was about to inflict, the anger that he would inevitably create. The pleasure of giving this offence to Mr. O'Connell was too great a temptation for Mr. Stanley's small stock of prudence and forbearance. The immediate enjoyment and triumph were all his own; the mischief that followed was felt by his colleagues and his country. Had this favourable opportunity been taken advantage of, had the ministry conciliated Mr. O'Connell, the peace of Ireland might have been secured, the Coercion Bill would never have been called for, or thought necessary, and the Whig administration would have escaped the disastrous consequences of that most fatal measure—fatal alike to the stability of their cabinet, and the welfare of the United Empire.

On the 24th of June Lord John Russell proposed his second edition of the Reform Bill, in a speech very different in tone and spirit from that which distinguished his first attempt. The great favour with which the measure had been received, the decided

result of the late elections—the majority which indoors the ministers could now command, the unbounded popularity which they enjoyed with the people outside the House, all conspired to give vigour to the manner of the noble lord, and strength and pith to his statements and his reasoning. He had profited too by the ample discussion the subject had received—and his discourse consequently was more worthy of the great argument with which he had to deal, and the striking position in which he was placed, than was his original exposition. He did not now seem to approach the ark of the constitution with that doubt and fear and trembling which previously marked his whole demeanour. He now spoke like a man confident of his course, fully assured not merely of the rectitude of his purpose, but of the wisdom and efficiency and justice of the means by which he proposed to effect that purpose. The noble lord had evidently gathered courage from the enthusiastic support of the people, not only to assault with bolder argument the errors and anomalies of the system he proposed to amend, but to reply to his opponents with more of vehemence and sarcasm than he had formerly thought it politic to employ. He had no longer an adverse audience to address—the majority was now on his side—and in the House of Commons he played a winning game. So changed, indeed, was his position and his own frame of mind, that he looked back with something like a feeling of shame and confusion to those petty proposals which almost annually he with trembling

hesitation submitted to the consideration of parliament; he blushed to think how small a reformer he once had been, and sought not to justify the boldness of his present plans, but to excuse the timidity of his former conduct, to account for and extenuate the trivial nature of his little temporising and inefficacious remedies. The popular teaching had proved of marvellous efficacy.

'The House may remember,' said the noble lord, 'that I myself have been an advocate for a less extensive and thorough reform. I have said, on former occasions, that if one member were taken from each of the small boroughs, it would be a reform sufficient and satisfactory; but when I came to the consideration of a measure of this kind attached and belonging to a government, I was obliged to ask myself whether I could promise anything permanent or lasting out of any measure which left to Gatton or Old Sarum the power of returning one member. If upon my former plan of reform, Gatton and Sarum preserved one member each, would not the first motion in the reformed parliament have been to do away with the remaining representations of those places?'[1]

The noble lord in this spirit dealt with the various arguments that had been urged against the measure, and then explained the few alterations which experience had induced the ministers to propose. The chief of these was a revision of the Schedules A and B.

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1831, Sess. 2, vol. i. p. 121.

Inquiry, he said, had shown, that the basis adopted in the former bill was not altogether accurate, and therefore careful investigation had been employed to rectify such errors as had crept into the returns. The principle being still retained, some few boroughs had changed places. [1]

No discussion followed, and no opposition was raised. Sir Robert Peel proposed, and his proposal was immediately acceded to, that the discussion should take place on the second reading, which was appointed for July the 4th.

The bills for Ireland and Scotland were to be brought in; the first by Mr. Stanley, and the second by the Lord Advocate. The mode attempted before of making all these bills proceed, *pari passu*, had been found inconvenient, and now, therefore, a separate discussion was to take place on each bill;—a mode of proceeding fraught with great mischief, as it makes the people of Ireland and Scotland (but more especially the former) consider themselves a separate people—subject, by this distinction in the process of legislation, to direct oppression, because of the different measures of justice with which the three nations are served. One bill might have been easily made applicable to the united kingdoms, and the whole people would then have found therein their one constitutional code. But feelings of personal vanity interfere with this rational plan of proceeding, and the first to oppose this equal method of legislation are the leading

[1] The various schedules will be found in the Appendix.

Irish and Scotch members of government. They are pleased by the temporary importance conferred on them by an Irish or Scotch debate, and are soothed, exalted, flattered by the constant appeals made on such occasions to themselves as great authorities in all matters pertaining to their country. But this small gratification is bought at a great price. It gives a colour of truth to the charge of unfairness and unequal dealing on the part of England and English ministers with respect to the less powerful members of the United Kingdom. The belief that such injustice prevails in all our legislation is carefully inculcated upon the minds of the ignorant, and habits and feelings of antipathy and hate are the natural consequence.

The Irish bill was brought in by Mr. Stanley, June 30th, and called forth expressions of great displeasure on the part of Mr. O'Connell and Mr. Shiel, who both complained, and justly, of the difference existing between the proposed plans of reform for England and for Ireland. The narrow constituency in Ireland, and the complicated nature of the right, were grievous blots in the measure now brought in. The Whigs, when in opposition, complained loudly of the disfranchisement of the forty-shilling freeholders. Now that they were a government and had power to redress, in some degree, this injustice, they permitted it to remain a monument of the bigotry of former governments, and of the somewhat hypocritical nature of their own opposition.

The Lord Advocate, on the 1st of July, brought in the bill relating to Scotland, in which no material alterations were to be proposed.

On the 4th of July, Lord John Russell moved the second reading of the English reform bill, and thereupon a debate of three nights followed—in which all the arguments both for and against the measure were restated, with nothing of novelty in the manner to compensate for the tedium which a thrice-told tale naturally inspired. Sir Robert Peel, for the first time in his life, met a really hostile House of Commons, and showed, by the dexterity with which he managed the prejudices, and conciliated the good-will of his opponents, that seldom in that House had there been seen any one more skilful in that curious species of disputative warfare which occurs in deliberative assemblies. To wise forethought, to large and generous views, to philosophy, to eloquence, the right honourable gentleman could lay no claim on this occasion. Astuteness, quickness, dexterity, and a certain plausibility that appeared like wisdom—all these were his. But looking at his conduct as that of a statesman, whose aim and purpose in life was the good of his country, his whole course of conduct was a glaring error—all his anticipations of evil have been signally belied, and he now stands a living witness of his own grievous mistake, both as regards his own position, and the future destiny of his country.[1] The convul-

[1] This passage, written in 1849, I have left as it originally stood.

sions with which he threatened us, as the necessary consequence of the Reform Bill, have not occurred. The internal condition of this country, its external relations, have received no shock from the change which he so vehemently deprecated. The obedience of the people to the law is as great as ever; the wisdom and intelligence of the more instructed among us still guide and direct us; we are, in short, still a peaceful, enlightened, and improving people. If then the threatening denunciations of Sir Robert Peel were really believed by himself, certain it is he was most completely mistaken—if they were the mere artifice of an unscrupulous rhetorician, they have received a most signal rebuke.[1]

The division on the second reading, which took place on Wednesday, July 6th, proved in a mode that could not be controverted, the extent of the change wrought in the composition of the House by the dissolution, and arithmetically demonstrated the completeness of the ministerial victory: the numbers being—

For the second reading . . .	367
Against it	231
Majority	136

[1] There is not the shadow of a reason for believing that Sir Robert Peel was not really in earnest. Being a man he was subject to error, and this instance was the capital mistake of his life.

The opposition clearly saw that direct opposition in the Commons was now hopeless. The means of delay were, however, yet in their power; and thus, as they believed, a chance was still afforded them of defeating the measure. The most plausible pretence employed for this purpose was a proposal made by Lord Maitland on the 12th of July upon the motion that the House should resolve itself into committee on the bill. The noble lord had presented a petition from the burgesses and inhabitants of the borough of Appleby on the 22nd of June, and now moved that it should be read. The purport of the petition was, that counsel should be heard on their behalf against the disfranchisement of Appleby, as proposed by the bill; and Lord Maitland moved, that the petitions should be referred to the committee, and counsel heard thereon. The ministry stoutly resisted this most insidious proposal. The Attorney-General, who seldom seemed inclined to mince his language, but rather to delight in an unceremonious phraseology, declared at once, in answer to a plausible speech by Sir Robert Peel, 'that it was impossible not to see that under the mask of a petition from a particular borough, the motion now submitted to the House would, if acceded to, prove a most effectual mode of defeating the bill.'[1] He contended that the committee could well discuss the allegations of the petition without the aid of counsel, and that the members

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1831, Sess. 2, vol. i. p. 498.

for the borough were fully competent to the task of defending the interests of their constituents. This plain speaking gave offence to Sir Edward Sugden, among others; and he thus remarked on it: 'I solemnly declare, that I consider the tone and manner, as well as argument, of my learned friend to have been such as to raise within us all our best feelings against him. It would seem from his tone and language and manner, that we are to be dragooned into this measure.' Sir Charles Wetherell said: 'That the Attorney-General, forgetting that amenity which usually distinguishes him, assumed a tone and manner in which he must permit me to say he has not of late been successful.' And speaking of the conduct of the administration, he indulged himself thus: 'In my opinion all this is too capricious, too trifling, too tyrannical, and too insulting to the British public to carry with it the acquiescence either of the majority within or of the majority out of the House.' The ground on which the application made by the petitioners rested was, that the number of the inhabitants of Appleby was more than 2000; and they therefore argued, that the borough ought not to be included in Schedule A. They called the bill a bill of pains and penalties, and claimed therefore the right of being heard against its provisions. The answer given was accurate and sufficient. The Chancellor of the Exchequer stated it with simplicity and effect:—

'The honourable and learned gentleman asks me

whether I do not consider the bill, as it affects the petitioners, and others similarly situated, a bill of pains and penalties? I do not. That cannot, with any show of justice, be called a bill of pains and penalties which has but one end—the public benefit. 'But,' says the honourable and learned gentleman, 'how can you attempt to decide on the case of Appleby if you refuse to hear the petitioners through their counsel?' The answer is simple. We have the evidence furnished by the population returns; and if witnesses are examined at the bar, they must necessarily, if not engaged in taking a census of the population, be unable to furnish as much evidence as we have already; and if they were the parties engaged in making out these returns, it is obvious that they could furnish us with nothing more than we know already. We have all the facts of the case already on the table; and I therefore contend that the members of this House are more competent to argue and to decide the question—and it is more their duty to do so—than to call in counsel to argue it for them.' In this opinion the House agreed, in spite of a confident speech by Mr. Croker in reply to the Chancellor of the Exchequer; the motion of Lord Maitland being negatived by a large majority.

For Lord Maitland's motion . .	187
Against it	284
Majority . . .	97

By this time members on both sides had become heated, and some of them impatient. An arrangement had been made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, on the one side, as leader of the ministerial party, and Sir Robert Peel on the other, as leader of the opposition, that the House should this evening go into committee on the bill. When, therefore, it was found that motions tending to an evasion of that agreement were made by the opposition, the eager partisans of the ministry became angry as well as impatient, and showed their state of mind by the ordinary modes of parliamentary interruption. Instead of permitting the House to go into committee after the last-mentioned division, Colonel Connolly commenced and achieved a long tirade against the bill. Some members cried 'Oh!' whereupon Colonel Sibthorpe rose to order. Colonel Connolly however yielded to the manifest impatience of the House, and sat down. After a question had been asked Lord John Russell respecting the mode in which certain returns relating to the bill had been made, and had been replied to, Mr. Attwood[1] took up the strain of complaint and argument, and entered once again into the merits of the whole question. Under the most favourable circumstances Mr. Attwood's

[1] This was Mr. Matthias Attwood, brother of the more celebrated Mr. Thomas Attwood, chairman of the Birmingham Political Union. The two brothers agreed in their doctrines of finance, but were opposed in general politics, Mr. M. Attwood belonging to the high Tory party.

manner was dismal and oppressive, and to the House in its present temper, seemed, if that were possible, more than usually tiresome and disagreeable. Interruption therefore was inevitable; but no sooner was it manifested in the usual manner, than Mr. J. E. Gordon moved the adjournment of the debate. This was opposed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who very frankly stated, that the House at that late hour could do no more than go into committee *pro formâ*, but that he thought he was not asking too much when he requested gentlemen to take that course. He added, if this reasonable proposal was opposed, he should take the sense of the House upon it. This by the opposition was construed into a threat; and thereupon the pent-up wrath of those who now, for the first time in their lives, found themselves and their party in a minority, burst forth; and they resolved to thwart the ministry by insisting upon an instant adjournment of the debate. A division took place on the question that the debate be now adjourned till to-morrow:—

Ayes	102
Noes	328
Majority	226

These numbers spoke plainly the feelings of the House—but they who had begun this unseemly quarrel were far too excited to listen to any reasonable suggestion. A motion was immediately made that the House do now adjourn, and one of those

strange contests followed, between the majority and minority, which by the forms of the House must always end in the substantial victory of those who desire delay. Eight divisions succeeded each other in rapid succession—the anger of all parties increasing with the continuance of the contest. The one side accused the other of faction. They in return accused their opponents of wishing to take advantage of their majority in an overbearing and tyrannical manner. At length all parties being tired, and heartily ashamed of this most absurd dispute—and long after Sir Robert Peel had left his unruly followers, whose numbers had dwindled to twenty-four, the House did what the Chancellor of the Exchequer had originally proposed—i. e., went into committee *pro formâ*. The committee reported progress, and the House adjourned at seven in the morning, after having wasted the whole night in useless and exasperating wrangling!

This evening's proceedings did serious injury to the opposition. After such an exhibition of violence, ill temper, and rude manners, they could no longer descant upon the change for the worse that would take place, if a really popular assembly were substituted for the well-bred nominees of the aristocracy. The prophecy as to the certain deterioration in the behaviour of the House of Commons that would result from the proposed change in its constitution had hitherto been a favourite and by no means ineffective argument against the Reform Bill. There was now an end to the use of any such disparaging suggestion.

But the mischief to the opposition interests went much further than this. The expectant people, as well as the ministerial majority, became impatient and exasperated. The whole proceeding, which most probably was entirely accidental, was supposed to have been preconcerted. That which was the result of sudden excitement, was believed to have been brought about by factious conspiracy; and the excited world out of doors began to ask themselves the dangerous question, 'Are we bound to await the pleasure of these interested and factious opponents?—are we tamely to suffer them to employ the forms of the constitution thus unjustly as a means of delay, and shall we not quicken their tedious pace by a significant exhibition of our power and our impatience?' The people were rapidly advancing to a state of mind that would lead them to give a very peremptory answer to this alarming questioning.

The next night proved that all this opposition and hubbub was merely the effect of spleen and wounded vanity, and that it did not arise, because obstruction had really been thrown in the way of members desiring to be heard against the bill. On this evening, Mr. J. E. Gordon, whose hot blood on the previous night had been roused by the expressed impatience of the House, to move the adjournment, now delivered himself of his speech—to which he before had been unable to win attention—that speech over, no one followed, and the House went into committee.

Mr. Charles Wynn now moved to postpone the

discussion of the clauses relating to the Schedules A and B, and the schedules themselves. This proposal, which really sought delay in the hope that the chapter of accidents might still bring about something to destroy the bill altogether, was nevertheless not without a plausible justification, which as was to be expected was discovered by Sir R. Peel. The ministers had taken for their rule when disfranchising, the amount of population, and for their guide to ascertain that amount, the population returns of 1821, and they had permitted objections to be made, and evidence to be given, proving in particular cases, that the returns were erroneous, and that the population of certain of the boroughs intended to be disfranchised, exceeded 2000 souls. Now then said Sir R. Peel, you say this fact shall guide you—and you say also that you wish to disfranchise no borough which really has a population of 2000 souls. Why not, then, take the best means of ascertaining that fact. You acknowledge that the returns of 1821 are erroneous, and necessarily in many cases a fallacious guide; wait, then, two or three weeks, and the returns of 1831 will be on the table of the House, and let them decide. He put his argument forcibly: 'I must however protest,' he said, 'against our being forced into committee in this way; and if his Majesty's government had adopted a prudent course, they would, after the strong opinion that has been expressed in favour of the principles of this measure—after a majority of 136—they would for the sake of the mea-

sure itself, have avoided calling our attention to the details of this bill until they were in possession of better documents on which to proceed. They know what is coming on—they are aware of the event which is casting its shadow before—namely, that the boroughs will be overtaken by the population returns of 1831. In another fortnight these returns will be laid before this House, and though his Majesty's ministers now proceed expressly on the doctrine of a population of 2000, or 4000, yet they are guilty of the inconceivable absurdity of proceeding on the population returns of 1821, when they can so soon be in possession of the census of 1831. Before this bill leaves the House, it may be shown that so inapplicable are the returns of 1821 on the present occasion, that there are many boroughs so increased since that time in population, as that they ought to be included, where they are now excluded from the enjoyment of the franchise. Surely those who are solicitous for the success of this measure will wait until those returns can be procured.'[1]

The answer given by Lord John Russell was hardly sufficient. The doubts that had arisen were applicable only to one or two places, and these had been cleared up by the inquiries made by the government in the interval of time that occurred between the two parliaments. This probably was the case. A little care, however, would have enabled them to have put the

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1831, Sess. 2, vol. i. p. 551.

question beyond all doubt or cavil.[1] They ought before they brought in their bill, to have ascertained the population from the census of 1831, and to have chosen an arbitrary number, which, according to that census, would have justified the disfranchisement. The boroughs selected were clearly either nomination or close boroughs in fact. The country desired their disfranchisement because they were so, and the alteration of a few hundreds in the population between 1821 and 1831 did not change the character of the boroughs, or afford the means of making therein an independent constituency. The ministers, however, depended on their majority, and negatived Mr. Wynn's proposal: the numbers on the division being—

For the motion	174
Against it	292
Majority	118

The answer given by Mr. Charles Wood, on the next day, when this subject was revived, is that which ought at the outset to have been stated and

[1] Lord John Russell said, on the following day, with regard to the population returns, I do not know how many are ready, but this is not the foundation, I beg to observe, on which the bill proceeds. I, however, have no objection to their being produced; but it should be remembered, that the Reform Bill is founded on a census taken at a time when those who made the returns could not have made them for the express purpose of saving their borough from disfranchisement.'—*Mirror of Parliament*, 1831, Sess. 2, vol. i. p. 569.

strictly adhered to. The wavering of ministers in the matter occasioned all the difficulty.

'The numbers assumed as the standard in the bill,' said Mr. C. Wood, 'have reference to the census of 1821, which constitutes an element of the plan quite as much as the numbers 2000 and 4000. I have in my hand a speech which was delivered by a noble lord in the other House of parliament in the course of the last session, in which it is distinctly shown that a great many more boroughs would have been disfranchised, or that several avowedly nomination boroughs would have escaped had the line been drawn from any other point. I contend, then, that the population returns of 1821 having been adopted must be adhered to.'[1]

The House went now regularly into committee on the bill until the 6th of September, when at length the dreary warfare of the opposition came of necessity to an end;—every clause—nay, almost every letter of the bill having been most strenuously cavilled at, criticised, and abused. To follow this continued opposition through all its countless repetitions is impossible—and if possible, useless. So little of ability of any sort, except the ability of annoyance, has seldom been exhibited in the House of Commons. The reason of this was, that the more distinguished members generally abstained from taking part in the violent and unseemly squabbling that was vigorously maintained by Sir Charles Wetherell, Sir Edward Sugden, and Mr. Croker. In Sir Charles there was so much

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, p. 572.

of *fun*, so much of good humour, and sometimes of quaintness in his buffoonery, that the House laughed, was amused, and not unwillingly forgot the annoyance, in the drollery which occasioned it. Sir Edward Sugden's opposition, however, was a dreary infliction—a painful example of impotent rancour and ill-tempered carpings, to which Mr. Croker's audacity and fluent acerbity could give neither support nor attraction.

The opposition of Sir Robert Peel was throughout candid and fair; admitting his premises conclusive, and always worthy of attention. Still we cannot avoid wondering at the importance he attached to all the old peculiarities of our former system of representation, and also at the very exaggerated anticipations he had formed as to the effect of the changes proposed in that system. He may now indeed say to those who believed that immense changes were to take place, and, as they believed, beneficially, in the institutions of our country—Behold for how small a result you ventured the great dangers of change! But the answer is not wanting—Why, if that change were so small, were you unwilling to purchase peace and confidence at so low a price? A clear-sighted politician would have seen, and a thoroughly candid one perceiving, would have acknowledged, that the changes proposed affected not the real character of our constitution—and that the wish of the people to try by such careful and experimental alterations of our institutions to make them in accordance with the present

condition of all classes, was not unreasonable, and was certainly not to be imputed to them as an instance of a wild desire to try dangerous experiments, or to risk the peace of the country by reckless and daring innovations. When Sir Robert Peel found, by the result of the elections, what were, in fact, the desires of the people of England—not those of the populace, of the ignorant, the needy, the unscrupulous, but of the people in the wide acceptation of that term—he, as a wise and prudent statesman, ought at once to have yielded—as he did subsequently;—he should have accepted the bill, and endeavoured, as he has since successfully, to render these alterations subservient to those conservative views which he has always most carefully and steadily kept before him. Had he done so, he would have escaped the great danger, to which the whole frame of our constitution, and society, were exposed by the extraordinary events which followed quickly upon the bill passing the Commons.

During the passage of the bill through the committee, three proposals were made, which deserve to be recorded. One by Lord Chandos—viz., that tenants paying 50*l.* per annum for their holdings, should have a vote in the counties. This proposal was successful, being carried by a large majority — the numbers being—

In favour of the amendment of Lord Chandos,	232[1]
Against it	148
Majority	84

[1] This was carried on the 18th of August.

Another by Mr. Hume, that our colonies should be represented, which proposal failed;[1] and the third by Mr. Hunt, that all householders paying rates and taxes should have votes, which was also unsuccessful.[2]

Mr. Hume's proposal excited attention from the House, though not from the administration. Mr. Labouchere, in a feeble speech, endeavoured simply to allow the matter to pass without discussion; but the party opposite, who sought any and every opportunity of troubling the ministry, took it up, exhibiting during the debate an utter ignorance of the state of our colonial dependencies, and of the circumstances upon which the well-being of our colonies, and the beneficial continuance of our colonial rule, depend. They supported Mr. Hume, because by so doing they obstructed the administration, not because they believed his proposal of importance to the colonies or to England. The proposition was negatived, and we have yet to discover the best means of making the wants of the colonies known to, and appreciated by the metropolis which founds them.

Mr. Hunt's proposal was of more direct interest; had it been carried, a real and most extensive change would indeed have been effected. The House of

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[1] This was proposed on the 16th of August, and negatived without a division.

[2] This was proposed on the 24th of August; the numbers on division were—

For Mr. Hunt's amendment	1
Against it	123

Commons would thereby have been rendered the representation of the numerical majority of the people; and the prejudices as well as the interests of that majority would have found, not merely a voice, but have exercised a powerful influence in the House of Commons. The proposal was at once negatived.

The clause proposed by Lord Chandos was by many reformers regarded with great disfavour, because it was deemed likely to give the landed aristocracy an undue influence upon the county elections; and as the ballot was not adopted, the tenant farmers, it was thought, would be wholly at the mercy of the landlords, and compelled to vote at their dictation. The danger from this source was, in my opinion, greatly exaggerated. The many circumstances that might arise to give the tenant power over the landlord, were entirely overlooked. The possibility of a change occurring in the relations between them, by which the landlord would become more anxious to let his land than the tenant to hire it, was not taken into account when the probable effects of this clause on the future elections were estimated. Yet we may live to see the day, in which the tenant farmers are placed in direct opposition to the owners of the soil, and sending representatives to parliament pledged to promote the interests of the farmer as distinct from those of the landlord. So soon as the tenant farmer looks upon himself simply as a capitalist, employing money upon land for purposes of profit, he will discover that the circumstances upon which his success depends are not

those which insure to the landlords high rents, and that the legislation which gives a monopoly to the owner of the soil, is not that which is most beneficial to him who tills it. When this discovery is made by the tenants, they will rise in insurrection against their landlords, and mark their enfranchisement at the county polling booths.

On 19th of September, Lord John Russell moved the third reading of the bill—upon which again the House divided. The numbers, however, show that on both sides there was weariness, not to say disgust.

There were for the third reading .	113
Against it	58
Majority	55

Still another ordeal remained for the bill to pass through. On the motion that the bill do pass, a final debate ensued. The arguments on both sides, which had already been so often stated, were once more repeated. But nothing new was said; and all that was novel in the discussion was the evidence given by the *manner* of the speakers, rather than by their language, that the excitement out of doors respecting the measure was increasing daily, and that it had already risen to a point, alarming to rational men of all classes, who were not blinded by the fierce spirit of party, which then indeed raged with almost unprecedented fury. This alarm was manifest, as well in the splendid declamation of Mr. Macaulay, as in the astute and dexterous debating of Sir Robert

Peel. It was apparent also in the sour ravings of Mr. Croker,[1] and the droll buffoonery of Sir Charles Wetherell. Mr. Macaulay, and the reformers generally, endeavoured to turn this alarm to account. They spoke of a danger that was imminent—they described in shadowy phrase — the more exciting, because veiled and ambiguous—the menacing port and dangerous feelings of the people, and the probable consequences of not granting what was now so anxiously and vehemently demanded. On the other hand, Sir Robert Peel imputed to the government all this mischief and danger. They, he said, had raised the storm from which they sought to derive advantage. They who resisted those demands were not to be blamed, if evil followed; but they, he asserted, were the real criminals, who stirred up the people to this state of sedition, and created expectations which they

[1] Mr. Croker was careful always to follow Mr. Macaulay in the debate, endeavouring to rival him in eloquence, and hoping to surpass him in the cogency of his reasoning. It was a curious sight to see the rivalry of a review writer break out in the legislature. It was the *Quarterly*, as Mr. Croker appeared to think, against the *Edinburgh;*—and that which could not be said in the House was given by way of supplement in the *Review*. The *Quarterly*, vol. xlvii. No. XLIII. issued for March, 1831, distinctly puts the two champions forward as literary and political rivals; and any one referring to its pages would suppose that Sir Robert Peel and every other Conservative played second to Mr. Croker, who is styled the *old flagellifer*, and spoken of as—

'*Alternis* aptum sermonibus, et populares
Vincentem strepitus, et natum rebus agendis.'

Could it be that he was willing to comment in the *Review* upon what he had said in the House, and impartially give himself the palm of victory?

knew beforehand they could not satisfy. The popular feelings which called forth these opposite arguments were, indeed, extraordinary and alarming.

A division—the last—took place on the 21st of September, upon the question, 'That this bill do pass;' and, being the last, the numbers were large, and intended to be significant of the strong opinion of the House of Commons respecting the measure upon which they now decided. There were—

For the bill	345
Against it	236
Majority	109

The fate of the bill in the House of Commons had long been decided. The opinions of the members were well known at the time of the election; and the division on the second reading simply confirmed the estimate of the relative strength of the opposing parties in the House, which everybody had already made. In this state of things, the pertinacious opposition to the bill, on the part of the excited section of the high Tory party, served merely to exasperate the people. In doors and out, all saw that merely useless, tiresome procrastination was the only result of the course pursued. The turmoil that was created, served rather to diminish than to increase any chance of improving the measure in its details. Indiscriminate attack and criticism led to indiscriminate defence, and dogged adherence to the written word of the bill. Every proposal, whether judicious or not, coming from

the opposition, was looked upon with suspicion; and men who openly declared that they desired to damage the bill, and to render it unserviceable and impracticable as a working law, could hardly wonder that their suggestions were rejected when, by accident even, they were wise and judicious, looking at the bill simply as a law. There was, however, another conclusion which the people drew, that led to many still more important as well as evil results. The small section of ultra Tories in the Commons were supposed to speak the sentiments of the majority of the peers. Now public solicitude and attention had been for some time almost exclusively directed to the House of Lords. The certainty of success in the Commons allowed this. The people and the press—which, in fact, only gave a voice to the popular opinion and will, had for weeks been discussing the one question—'What will the Lords do?' In answer to this suggesting question, every possible line of conduct before the Lords was described, and its consequences discussed. That the Lords wished to reject the bill was assumed by all—that they would certainly reject it was not so generally admitted. This was supposed to depend upon the opinion which the majority of the Lords might form as to the possible, or rather probable danger, of refusing the popular demand. Some said they would act as those had who in the Commons spoke their sentiments, and endeavour at once to throw out the bill. Others, however, were inclined to believe that the experience of the last few months

would induce them to pause, and shrink from so dangerous—so desperate a step. Now, as the conduct of the Lords appeared to many dependent upon the extent of their fears—upon their estimation of the degree of the danger attendant upon the course they desired to take; these same persons deemed it not impolitic to give the Lords some significant hints as to what this danger might be. So soon, therefore, as the bill passed the Commons, an illumination of London was proposed, and a formal application was made to the Lord Mayor, in order to obtain his sanction for the proceeding.[1] He acceded to the request—an illumination took place, and the populace pretty generally broke the windows of houses not lighted up. Certain persons, distinguished as opponents of the bill, suffered thus in their property. The judicious friends of the bill were alarmed at this conduct, lest the timid should thereby be induced to believe the prophecies of the anti-reformers, and take these outbreaks of the popular indignation as a commencement of the revolution which the bill was said to have brought about. The people, however, were too excited to listen to such prudent suggestions; they met in large numbers in every part of the country, and came to strong resolutions respecting the bill and its opponents and friends.

[1] A placard was forged and published in the *Morning Post*, purporting to be a proclamation by the Lord Mayor. In this, threats of violence appeared against those who would not illuminate. This was done for the purpose of alarming the possessors of property generally, in the hope of thus disgusting them with the bill and its proposers.

The exasperation of the people began now to lead to acts and declarations beyond the limits of the law. The populace, in many places, gave very strong symptoms of riotous intentions; and, in some instances, riots actually occurred. This was but a prelude of the storm that was to come.

In this condition of the public mind, the bill went up to the House of Lords, on the 22nd of September. The second reading was fixed for Monday, the 3rd of October, and on that day Lord Grey, in a grave, sustained, and elaborate speech, submitted the whole subject of the bill and its provisions to the consideration of their lordships. Thereupon followed a debate which extended to the 7th of the same month; and which, for the general ability of the speeches delivered upon the occasion—for the variety and height of eloquence then displayed—for the dignity, vigour, and elegance of the language—and for the cogency, completeness, and ingenuity of the arguments of almost every speaker, was a most admirable, striking, and memorable example of finished excellence in parliamentary discussion.

In the House of Commons, the bill, the whole bill, and, in fact, nothing but the bill had been the subject of continued, unceasing debate for the months of March, April, July, August, and the greater part of September. The long period of time thus employed upon one question, the various modes in which it came before the House for discussion, the multitude of ever-changing and novel circumstances which accompanied this fiercely sustained contest, had, in the judgment of

most men, enabled the speakers in the House of Commons to exhaust the whole subject—to render novelty upon it, whether of manner or matter, absolutely impossible; and thus the House of Lords was supposed necessarily reduced to be but the mere echo of those to whom fortune had given the initiative upon this memorable occasion. In this expectation, however, the world was agreeably deceived. To say, indeed, that any absolutely novel argument, either for or against the measure, was discovered by the noble speakers, would perhaps not be accurate; yet the manner in which their arguments were marshalled—the new and striking illustrations with which they were accompanied—the highly wrought, yet simple style of almost every speaker—and last, but not least in the list of novelty and advantage, the compression of the whole discussion into one striking and masterly debate, conferred at once revived interest, and freshness and life upon an apparently exhausted subject—a subject, indeed, which seemed dead as a matter of discussion, though of increased, and still increasing interest as a question long ripe for decision.

Lord Grey gave an earnest, simple, yet dignified description of his own efforts and opinions respecting parliamentary reform—of the vicissitudes which had of necessity attended those opinions—and of the circumstances which, at the very close of his career, called upon the old man to put into practice the theories and speculations of his youth and his manhood. He defended himself against the imputation of

rashness, because of the largeness of the changes he proposed. 'I felt,' said the noble lord, with a wisdom which experience has proved and justified, 'I felt that the most prudent and the most safe measure I could propose would be a bold one, and this the more especially, because I felt that looking to the safety of the country as our true policy, I could effect what would satisfy the feelings and reasonable desires of the people, which would thus give me a position on which I could make a firm stand for the defence of the true principles of the constitution.'[1] The manner in which Lord Grey, himself a peer, and addressing the House of Peers, explained these principles, and the mode in which they had from time to time been invaded, would probably not have been entirely agreeable to a democratic assembly, but was eminently well qualified to assuage the fears of his audience, and win them to his views, by exciting their generosity and appealing to their high sense of honour, and to that exalted feeling of dignity and distinction, which rests upon and is derived from a consciousness of exercising justly and honestly a noble prerogative. While thus constantly appealing to all the more exalted sentiments of his audience, he went through with great skill, clearly and minutely, the prosaic explanation of the actual provisions of the proposed measure. He dwelt upon the necessity which compelled each proposed change, and descanted

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, Sess. 2, vol. iii. p. 2596.

upon the anxious hopes of the people, and the danger of rudely disappointing them. But here Lord Grey felt, that his task became one of no ordinary difficulty, considering the imperious and haughty nature of the assembly he was endeavouring to persuade. Brave he knew them to be, and angrily susceptible when approached with a menace. He had to make them understand that there was really cause for alarm, and at the same time to convince them, that no one supposed they were to be terrified into acquiescence. 'In addressing your lordships, then,' he said, 'I fling aside all ideas of menace and intimidation; but I conjure you, as you value your rights and dignities, and as you wish to transmit them unimpaired to your posterity, to lend a willing ear to the representations of the people. Do not take up a position which will show that you will not attend to the voice of nine-tenths—I believe I am below the mark in stating it at this, but certainly of nine-tenths of the people, who call upon you in a tone too loud not to be heard, and too decisive to be misunderstood.'[1] After dwelling upon the almost complete unanimity of the people, and showing the immense preponderance of county and city members who had voted for the bill, he again recurred to the danger of resisting a desire thus expressed and thus general. He stated that if this measure were refused, none less would be accepted, none less would, if accepted, be satisfactory. 'Do not, my lords,' he added, 'I beg, flatter yourselves, that it will be

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, p. 2601.

possible by a less effective measure than this to quiet the storm which will rage, and to govern the agitation which will have been produced. I certainly do, as I said before, deprecate popular violence. As a citizen of a free state, and feeling that freedom is essentially connected with order, I resist violence; as a member of the government, it is my duty to maintain tranquillity; but as a citizen, as a member of the government, as a man and a statesman, I am bound to look at the consequences which may flow from rejecting this measure. And although I do not state, as the noble Duke did on another occasion, that the rejection of the measure would lead to civil war—*I trust it will not produce any such effect*—yet I see such consequences likely to arise from it as make me tremble for the security of this House and of the country. Upon your lordships, then, as you value the tranquillity and prosperity of the country, I earnestly call to consider well before you reject this measure.'[1]

The next and closing appeal of the noble lord was a curious one. It chimed in, however, with reigning and very strong feelings; it also alarmed and offended an influential class of the community. To the bishops Lord Grey addressed a memorable warning; telling them, in the words of Scripture, 'to put their house in order;' and very significantly giving them to understand, that their position was surrounded by great danger, and that the distinction

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, p. 2604.

and power they now enjoyed, would be the first destroyed were any popular disturbance to occur. This warning was perfectly justified by the actual state of public opinion, as was shown immediately upon the rejection of the bill. Public anger was at once especially directed against the whole bench of bishops, and rose to such a height, that they could hardly appear in the streets dressed in their episcopal garb, without being subjected to great contumely, and even some personal danger. No more popular topic of discourse could be found by those who addressed large public meetings, than the uselessness or mischievousness of the bishops as an order of the state; and a proposal summarily to eject them from the House of Lords would, by the multitude, have been in every instance hailed with rapturous delight. The language of Lord Grey, while appealing to them, called the public attention to their conduct, and in fact increased for them the very danger which he described as existing, and wished to avert.

Of the speeches that followed in this memorable debate, the most remarkable were those delivered by Lord Dudley, Lord Plunkett, the Lord Chancellor, and Lord Lyndhurst. Lord Dudley's objections to the measure were such as a member of Mr. Canning's party might be expected to entertain, and were expressed in the epigrammatic style which characterized all he said; but his speech was fairly open to the criticism which the Lord Chancellor applied to it. In reviewing the debate, the Chancellor said:

'I will begin with what fell from the noble Earl (Dudley), with whose display I was far less struck than others, because I was more accustomed to it, who, viewing the bill from a remote eminence, and not coming close, or even approaching near, made a *reconnoisance* of it too far off to see even its outworks, who, indulging in a playful and elegant pleasantry—to which no man listens in private with more delight than myself, knowing how well it becomes the leisure hours and familiar moments of my noble friend—delivered with the utmost purity of diction, and the most felicitous aptness of allusion—I was going to say a discourse, but it was an exercise or essay—of the highest merit, which had only this fault, that it was an essay or exercitation on some other thesis, and not on this bill. It was as if some one had set to my noble friend—whose accomplishments I know, whose varied talents I admire, but in whom certainly I desiderate soundness of judgment and closeness of argument—a theme *de rebus publicis*, or *de motu civium*, or *de novarum rerum cupiditate*—on change, on democracies, on republicanism, on anarchy; and on these interesting but somewhat trite and threadbare subjects, my noble friend made one of the most terse, most lucid, most classical, and, as far as such efforts will admit of eloquence, most eloquent exercitations that ever proceeded from mortal pen.' Lord Dudley, like all men of his cast of mind, had a great contempt for what he called the people; and he dreaded the Reform Bill,

because he supposed it would give them power; and his fears and expectations were expressed in one sentence, which at once gives us the measure of his prophetic powers, and his knowledge of the character of his countrymen:—

'My lords,' he said, 'the truth is not to be disguised, this is a bill for a republic; it would soon abolish the substance, and in no long time the name of the monarchy and the peerage: neither monarchy nor peerage, nor both united, could cope with an assembly so constituted.'[1] He flung aside with contempt the usual common-places of the theoretic expounders of the English constitution, by denying at once the doctrine of the three independent powers or branches of which it is often said to be composed. 'It was only,' he asserted, 'because the Crown and the nobility had an influence in that assembly (the House of Commons), quite unacknowledged by the letter of the constitution, that the spirit of it was suffered to survive.' What he meant by the spirit of the constitution he did not describe. What others called the abuses of the constitution he considered essential parts of it; and he fairly avowed, that in his view the House of Commons was what he desired to see it, because it was nominated by the great landed proprietors; and that what he hated and dreaded was a House of Commons elected by the people. He said: 'It is only by those very things that are

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1831, Sess. 2, p. 2735.

complained of as abuses in our constitution that the balance has been restored, and the evil of the entire uncontrolled ascendancy of the popular branch of the legislature prevented, or at least mitigated in practice.' His argument, as he put it, was accurate, admitting his premises; and his frankness, whatever we may think of his discretion, demands our unfeigned admiration. Like Mr. Canning, he did not pretend to deny the anomalies of the constitution, but asserted that the result proved that those anomalies were not evils. It works well, he said, almost in the words of his former leader and friend; 'and I doubt whether a reformed House of Commons, in another hundred years, would be likely to exhibit to mankind a happier and more glorious England than that which the unreformed House has contributed to create. Every noble speaker against the bill coincided in this last view; and this argument throughout the debate was pressed against the administration. 'Why do you propose reform, they asked?' and complained, when they received for an answer a description of the anomalies of the constitution—of the popular wishes and popular discontent. They asserted, that those wishes, and that discontent, did not justify the wholesale change proposed; because, as they insisted, the evils of which the people complained did not arise from the defects of the constitution, and would not be remedied by altering the state of the representation. Lord Plunkett, who proposed the task to himself of answering a powerful speech of Lord

Carnarvon, in which this argument had been strongly pressed, rather evaded than replied to it. His statements might be sufficient to justify the administration, and to support the bill; but they were hardly a reply to the specific argument which he declared that he would refute. His dissection of Lord Dudley's theory, indeed, was an admirable exposure of its real meaning and character, and he truly remarked respecting it: 'That it is not at this time that such principles are to be combated—it is not at this period of enlightenment that such doctrines can be promulgated; because they will be met from one end of the kingdom to the other with the greatest exasperation.' [1]

The closing night of the debate brought out the two great champions of the contending parties, when the Lord Chancellor addressed the House in favour of the ministerial measure, and Lord Lyndhurst in opposition to it. The two noble lords had long been rivals, though always friends, and now they were brought into conflict—upon an arena among the most distinguished the world afforded, and upon as momentous a question as ever was submitted to a deliberative assembly. The scene had been long expected; and some little dallying had probably occurred on both sides for the purpose of obtaining the reply. The more excitable Chancellor, however, was content to forego whatever of advantage the last word afforded; and in order to

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1831, Sess. 1, p. 2801.

bring the real question to a decision, flung himself headlong into the debate.

The styles of the two speakers were remarkably dissimilar. The views of the Lord Chancellor were of a wider range than those of his great opponent. The principles upon which he rested his arguments, and based his policy, were of a more exalted character, were more in accordance with the advancing spirit of the age—and his anticipations of the future were more correct, as experience has already shown, than were those to which throughout Lord Lyndhurst appealed, and by which he sought to decide the great question now submitted to the consideration of the peers. The style of Lord Brougham, though vigorous, and sometimes happy, was too often diffuse, loose, and cumbrous, and always wanting in that exquisite accuracy, simplicity, and constantly equal and sustained force of his more sedate and self-collected antagonist. Looking back, however, and calmly weighing the merits of these celebrated efforts of these the two most distinguished orators of that day, we cannot, I think, fail to feel, that although in Lord Lyndhurst's speech there was nothing superfluous—that all was severely, and, if I may use the expression, serenely great—yet that in the higher, I ought to say the highest, excellence of impassioned reasoning, his rival was eminently superior. The cold sagacity of Lord Lyndhurst shines steadily throughout the whole of his discourse —but we feel no enthusiasm—we are not touched by any appeal to a generous sentiment—we never appear

to ourselves exalted by being called upon to share in and sympathise with any large and liberal policy. The speech of the Lord Chancellor produces effects of a very different description. Discursive, sometimes even trivial, it contains splendid and exciting appeals —wise and generous sentiments—cogent, effective argument; and we are anxious to believe him right, because while he attempts to satisfy the understanding, he enlists in his favour the emotions of his hearers by exhibiting an earnest solicitude for the well-being of his country and his kind.

As was to be expected, the whole of the chief arguments for and against the measure are to be found in these two speeches put with great force and happy illustration. The Chancellor described the necessity which led to its proposal, explained its provisions, and combated the arguments and the fears of those who opposed it. On the other hand, Lord Lyndhurst stood upon the ancient ways—denied that any necessity for such, or indeed any change, existed—and spoke lightly of the danger that might result from resisting the ministerial proposal. And of this opinion was a large majority of the peers whom he addressed, the numbers being, when the House divided at six o'clock in the morning of the 8th of October—

Non-contents . . .	present	150	
	proxies	49	—199
Contents	present	128	
	proxies	30	—158
Majority			41

This division took no one by surprise, though it excited an extraordinary agitation out of doors, not only in London, but throughout the country. In London the shops in many places were closed as a signal of a great public calamity—the funds suddenly fell, and gloom was in the minds of all reasonable men. The great events that had occurred in Paris, in the previous year, were again brought to their recollection, and the dread came with it, that an indignant people might resent the insolent injustice of the House of Lords so roughly as to shake to its foundations the whole fabric of the English constitution. The House of Commons met on the Monday following, fully cognisant of the feeling in the metropolis and such parts of the provinces as could communicate with London within the time that had elapsed. Everybody knew that the anger in the country would not be less than that shown in London—and the timid of all parties began now to tremble—and men even of firm nerve became anxious lest the peace of the country should be seriously endangered. Lord Ebrington, therefore, moved a vote of confidence in the ministers, the immediate object of which was to prove to the king that he could not dismiss the administration without incurring the risk of very serious commotion. The division which took place the same evening after a stormy debate showed that the House of Commons were not ready to desert either the bill or the ministers, the numbers being—

For Lord Ebrington's motion .	329
Against it	198
Majority	131

The king declared that he was anxious that the ministry should retain their offices,[1] and endeavour so to shape the bill as to make it acceptable to its opponents. This was a quiet way of saying, change your measure, but retain its name. The royal adviser, however, in this instance, took a wrong measure of his people's understanding. They knew what the proposed measure contained quite as well as the king himself, and, confident in their own strength, they were ready, and, in some instances, eager to do battle for their cause. This popular indignation evidently terrified the king and the court, and before twenty-four hours elapsed, the royal wish that they would not resign was communicated to his ministers, with the intimation that the opposition even dreaded such an event. Lord Grey and the Lord Chancellor acted upon this suggestion. They did not resign,[2] and

[1] The sudden falling of the funds and the shutting of the shops had frightened him. He became exceedingly anxious to learn what the bankers and merchants would do upon the occasion, and constantly pressed upon his ministers the necessity of keeping the people quiet—Lord Ebrington's motion was naturally highly displeasing to him.

[2] The propriety of resigning was seriously discussed by the administration, and until the fierce spirit of the people was apparent, was hoped for by the opposition. This defeat was expected to be the defeat of the bill and the ruin of the ministry. Lord Grey, however, was told and made to feel, that to resign would be considered treachery to the country.

they spoke forcibly against all attempts at violence, thus satisfying directly the king's wishes, and making the people understand that unless the excitement and fear were kept well alive, the bill was lost. Just at this moment, letters from Lord Althorp and Lord John Russell addressed to Mr. Thomas Attwood, chairman of the Birmingham Political Union, appeared in the papers—letters of no ordinary significance—giving extraordinary offence to the king, but serving materially to sustain the excitement out of doors. The middle classes, who are the most timid portions of the community, were by this means assured of the support that would be given them by the great families of the Whig aristocracy. This support made the excitement *respectable*, and thereby kept the middle class in the ranks of the reformers. Just before the division in the Lords, a great public meeting was held at Birmingham, consisting, it was said, of 150,000 persons. This meeting passed resolutions, thanking Lord Althorp and Lord John Russell for their conduct in the Commons during the passage of the bill through that House; and before the meeting separated, a resolution, by which a determination not to pay taxes if the bill were rejected by the Lords, was submitted to the multitude assembled. This revolutionary proceeding (for such it was) received at once the unanimous and vehement assent of the meeting. Mr. Attwood communicated the vote of thanks to the two noble lords, the closing resolution being made known to all the world through the newspapers. The Chancellor

of the Exchequer and Lord John Russell, nothing daunted, replied in set phrase of gratitude and compliment to the meeting, in letters to Mr. Attwood, who was celebrated as the great leader of the Birmingham Political Union; and the expressions of Lord John Russell's letter attracted universal attention and remark. 'It is impossible,' wrote the noble lord to Mr. Attwood, 'that the whisper of a faction should prevail against the voice of a nation.' These, in the existing circumstances, were very significant words. The whisper of a faction was the solemn vote of a large majority of the House of Lords; the persons addressed were men pledged to a revolution by an open and violent declaration that they would put a stop to the operations of the government, if that vote were carried. The vote had passed, and now a cabinet minister and a member of the government, who might be considered a cabinet minister, communicate with these men, and write in terms of great contumely to the House of Lords thus threatened and assailed. Every one now understood that the great Whig aristocracy had set their fortune on a cast, and that they were determined 'to stand the hazard of the die.' No wonder that the king should, in such a state of things, be alarmed and indignant. He daily, nay hourly, called upon his ministers to check this dangerous outbreak of the popular indignation[1]—to

[1] Early in the year the prosecution of Cobbett, in which the Attorney-General, Sir Thomas Denman, signally failed, had received the warmest encouragement and approval on the part

apply palliatives and not stimulants to the already too excited feelings of the people; and he composed an elaborate paper upon the dangers resulting to the peace and safety of the kingdom from the existence of political unions, and desired that his law officers should advise him as to the means afforded by the present law for the suppression of these associations, and what could be done if the law as it stood was not sufficient. We shall quickly see that his Majesty had good cause for alarm.[1]

The vote of confidence by the Commons tied the king's hands—the excitement out of doors cowed the opposition—the ministry therefore remained. But still, as the rising indignation of the people could not be soothed, some steps for resuming the bill were necessary. A prorogation was therefore needed. An important measure, however, brought in and suggested by the Lord Chancellor, required to be passed before the prorogation could be resorted to—viz., the Bill

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of the king. In fact, he continually pestered his ministers on the subject of the press, and the great danger resulting from its violence and audacity.

[1] In consequence of the urgent request of the king, a proclamation was issued by the ministers so soon as a political union was formed in London, warning the people of the illegality and impolicy of the proceedings adopted by the unions. This proclamation satisfied the king, but had no influence in preventing the increase and audacity of the unions, against which it was directed. The National Political Union ostentatiously posted the proclamation, in a large placard, at the door of the 'Crown and Anchor' tavern, in the Strand, which was at that time their head-quarters.

reconstructing the whole framework for the administration of the Bankrupt Law. The opposition and the court believed that the popular excitement would be greatly allayed were parliament prorogued. The opposition, therefore, to the Bankruptcy Bill in the Commons was confined almost entirely to the efforts of the excited and uncompromising Sir Charles Wetherell and the discontented Sir Edward Sugden. As the king, however, was known to desire an immediate end to the session, the ministers were able to prorogue the parliament on the 20th of October, the king in person delivering his speech on the occasion.

Before this occurred, however, various riots and serious disturbances took place in the country, and the city of Bristol was sacked and set on fire by the frantic and uncontrolled mob of that town. The castle at Nottingham, the property of the Duke of Newcastle, had also been assailed and burned by the insurgent populace, and in every part of the kingdom resistance to the government by a refusal to pay taxes was now openly talked of. Thus, in turmoil, confusion, and universal distrust and alarm, ended the first session of the newly elected parliament, with the understanding, however, that it was to be immediately re-assembled, in order that the Reform Bill might be again introduced.

CHAPTER III

FROM THE MEETING OF PARLIAMENT, DECEMBER 6TH, 1831, TO THE DEFEAT OF LORD GREY IN THE LORDS ON THE 7TH OF MAY, 1832, AND THE CONSEQUENT RESIGNATION OF THE MINISTRY.

BUT to prorogue and re-assemble parliament were evidently not sufficient. For the preservation of the public peace, the success of the bill was now become absolutely necessary. The very existence of the House of Lords was, by a large portion even of that House, at length considered to be in danger, and a violent revolution was dreaded by all except the fierce extremes of the two contending parties. The Republican Radicals were ready to adopt measures directly leading to civil war;—the ultra Tories were willing to brave the dangers resulting from convulsion rather than give up the monopoly of political power maintained by means of the existing House of Commons. Such, however, was not the feeling entertained by the quiet-loving majority of the people. Neither was the king of this mind—nor those who were his immediate and intimate advisers. He and they were alike terrified by the violence and fierce language of the press and the people, and ready to adopt any feasible means by which the bill might be passed

into a law. For some time past, in the press and in public meetings, various modes had been discussed of getting rid of the obstruction created by the House of Lords. Many there were among the more ardent of the people who deemed the most direct method the simplest and the best—that was, as they said, to get rid of the House of Lords itself as a branch of the legislature. A milder, and the more popular proposal, was the creation of a sufficient number of peers in whom the ministers could confide for the purpose of obtaining a majority in favour of the bill. The king when the Reform Bill was first proposed to him, distinctly foresaw the steps that he would be required to take if the bill were to become a law. But these steps he declared he would not take;—he would not, he said, dissolve the House of Commons should it reject the measure. He did, however, as we have already seen, under the mixed influence of vanity and alarm, dissolve the intractable parliament of 1830. But, said the king, there will be a collision between the two Houses—what, in that case, is to be done? I can never bring myself to consent to any coercion of the peers by means of creations. Yet now he was to be asked to yield even upon this point. Among the ministers, the first to adopt the idea of such a creation were the Lord Chancellor and Lord Durham. Long before the rejection of the bill by the Lords, both Lord Durham and the Chancellor spoke of the creation of peers as a thing to be adopted in extremity, and suggested that of a surety that

extremity would arrive. Lord Grey, when first he heard of the proposal from the Chancellor, started with undisguised repugnance, and declared that he could never bring himself to acquiesce in any such unconstitutional proceeding. As early as in September, 1831, the question was, however, gravely discussed in the cabinet, and the Lord Chancellor put on paper his reasons in favour of proposing the step to the king, should the peers reject the bill. At that time the Duke of Wellington spoke confidently of a majority of sixty, and the daring Chancellor was ready to meet this difficulty by a creation of sixty peers. The question however was, would sixty suffice?—and would not many persons now favourable to the bill leave the ministerial ranks upon such a proposal being even hinted at.[1] The hope that the peers would be alarmed by the threat and pass the bill rather than incur the evil of this large addition still lingered in the cabinet[2]—a large majority of whom declared that no consideration could induce them to coincide in opinion with the Chancellor. The bill being at length thrown out, the question came neces-

[1] Lord Durham distinctly discussed this objection in a paper written by him on the subject, and he decided that there would be no defection of the sort feared. This paper was in the form of a letter to Lord Grey, and was dated Jan. 1832.

[2] Sir James Graham was of this opinion, and proposed the creation of a small batch at first, in order to convince the peers that the ministers had the power and were prepared to exercise it. We shall see in the sequel that Sir James too soon assumed that the king's repugnance was overcome.

sarily and formally before the cabinet for discussion. Lord Holland agreed with the Chancellor and Lord Durham—and the latter urged in the strongest manner the necessity of an immediate and large creation of peers. Sir James Graham also was in favour of the creation, and to the extent needed; the Duke of Richmond, the Marquis of Lansdowne, Lords Melbourne and Palmerston, were vehemently opposed to it; Mr. Stanley doubted. Still, if the ministry were to continue, some step must be taken. If the ministry retired, civil war appeared inevitable. At this time the ministers professed to have doubts as to the obedience of the army—and whether, if the middle classes stood aloof and the mob should rise at the same moment in five or six different parts of the country, the peace could be preserved by a small number of troops of doubtful loyalty. This view of the state of the country was carefully pressed upon the king, and a proposal also made to him of forming a civic armed guard out of the middle classes—an institution which at that time would have placed supreme power in the hands of the administration—a power which they might have used, if they thought fit, to carry the Reform Bill, in defiance of the peers.

In this state of things the ministry looked almost entirely to the Chancellor for advice and for support. Lord Grey saw all the dangers and difficulties of his position, and trembled before them. He was kept at his post, and his courage was sustained by the more resolute and active mind of his colleague. Had that

failed him at this crisis, the ministry would have fallen to pieces, and the terrible consequences of such a failure every reasonable man in the country perceived and dreaded.

The king in the meantime began to surmise what he would soon be asked to consent to, and therefore took great pains to make all the ministers feel how unpalatable the intended proposal would be. He vehemently declared that he considered such a creation of peers a revolutionary proceeding, directly tending to the utter destruction of the House of Lords. He made manifest on every possible occasion his anxiety, and his actual mental suffering in consequence of such a fearful expedient being thought of. When, however, he in his terror at the fierce indignation of the people on the defeat of the bill, expressed his anxious desire and hope that the ministers would not resign, he seemed really to have receded from his former resolution; for the ministry could not remain, and not carry the bill; and they could not carry the bill with the House of Lords in its present temper, and as at present constituted. During the last days of December, the ministry therefore had constantly discussed the proposal for the creation of a large number of peers, in order to come to a definitive decision upon it; and on the 1st of January the majority reluctantly, and at first only partially, gave up their own opinions in favour of those of the Chancellor and Lord Durham. They authorized Lord Grey to speak to the king upon the subject, and to propose a crea-

tion of at least ten peers, which he did on the 3rd of January, and found his Majesty no longer in the mood of absolute refusal. He listened, and his manner induced Lord Grey to believe that he was prepared to follow the advice of his ministers,[1] whatever that

[1] The state of the king's mind at this time, and more particularly during this interview with Lord Grey, on the 3rd January, 1832, was very different from what it subsequently became. He with great reluctance and much agitation at the state of the country, but with great kindness to Lord Grey, and general expressions of confidence and approbation of all the cabinet, acquiesced in the measure of *peer making*, if, on reflection and examination, they should deem it necessary. He required, however, as is stated in the text, a written recommendation from his advisers, together with a statement of the necessity they felt, before he could take such a step: and he annexed a condition, which he hinted was essential for the preservation of the principle of hereditary peerage—viz., that the new peerages, with the scanty exception of two or at most three, should be either eldest sons or presumptive heirs of peerages; and he seemed to admit of no exception unless it were possibly in favour of a Scotch or Irish peer. He preferred, he said, doing *what was necessary at once* to proceeding by driblets, and offered to create twenty-one new peers, which he somewhat hastily assumed, that Lord Grey could warrant was sufficient to carry the bill. This matter much agitated him, and he accompanied his acquiescence with very earnest exhortation to the ministers to take their stand in England and Ireland against the disorganizing principles which, through public meetings, demagogues, and above all, the press, were directed against monarchy and aristocracy, and all established, particularly all *hereditary*, authority.

The conduct both of the king and Sir Herbert Taylor was exceedingly pleasing at this time to the cabinet, who believed they had the game in their own hands—and a proposal was made by some, or rather hinted at, that Sir Herbert Taylor might be, as they termed it, 'gratified' with a peerage.

At this moment, the Duke of Buckingham, through his son,

might be. In the meantime, his Majesty shrewdly required from all of them their opinions in writing on the question of the creation of the peers, frankly saying that nothing but a very stern necessity would ever induce him to consent to so *fatal* a proposal.

In the meantime a negotiation was commenced by Sir Herbert Taylor, the king's private secretary, with some of the opposition lords, more especially, or rather entirely, with Lord Wharncliffe, who appeared in the proceeding as the representative of certain other peers. The object on the part of Sir Herbert was to persuade the lords whom he addressed, to vote for the second reading of the bill, when it came again into their House; and the means of persuasion he employed was the fear of a creation of peers. This negotiation was eventually successful; but parliament again met on the 6th of December, without any definite decision on the part of the administration as to the course to be pursued.[1]

Lord Chandos, made what the ministers considered a sly underhand push at them, but was met and foiled by Sir H. Taylor, who showed all the Duke's letters to Lord Grey, and answered them in such a manner as to preclude further communications of that nature—which being of so grave a character, he thought and said should go through some official and responsible channel. All this occurred before the 8th of January.

[1] The apparently unsatisfactory result at the time of this negotiation may be described nearly in the terms employed respecting it, by Lord Wharncliffe himself. He said, 'that his sentiments had undergone no change, but that they were still moderate and conciliatory: that at present he was not so well able, as he should hereafter be, to ascertain the feelings of those who might be thought be induced to co-operate with Lord Har-

Out of doors, the division in the cabinet on the subject of the creation of peers was well known, and the reformers were aware of the whole difficulty which their friends had to encounter. The chief obstacle, the people believed, was not in the reluctance of the king to make peers, but in that of the cabinet to submit the proposal for his acceptance. While the ministers were divided, the king, they thought, was in reality not called upon to act. He was careful, nevertheless, to continue his loud and vehement expressions of distress at the mere contemplation of such an exercise of the prerogative. Those, too, who were immediately about his person, and who had the most constant opportunities of influencing his opinions, were

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rowby and himself—and that as the season advanced, greater facilities would offer themselves—which he trusted they would be able to avail themselves of with good effect, so as to insure the means of carrying the second reading of the Reform Bill.

'His own object he declared to be twofold, the one to produce a result which he considered under present circumstances the only safe way out of the difficulties in which the country was involved; the other, to prevent the introduction of the fatal proposal of creating peers, or even of adding to the number of the House of Lords, for the express purpose of forcing the measure through that House. And with respect to the latter object, he declared that he himself (and he was quite confident that his friends would all concur with him) would in the event of the government bringing forward and carrying into effect such creation of peers, or such addition to the House of Lords, convert the support which they were then disposed to give to the second reading, into the most uncompromising and bitter hostility to the government, upon the whole measure, and to every stage of it.'

ever active in keeping alive his repugnance, and making all persons connected with the court aware of his sentiments upon the subject. In this state of things, the only means left to the reformers was terror —and they assiduously endeavoured to excite alarm in the royal mind, and in the minds of his intimate advisers and his court, by every mode short of actual insurrection. The political unions came now into active operation. They resolved beforehand, and ostentatiously published their resolution, not to pay taxes, if the Lords again rejected the bill—and the ministers were called upon, with great vehemence and pertinacity, to put their lordships to the test by an immediate re-assembling of the parliament, and an instant re-proposal of the Reform Bill, in all its former efficiency. The ministers, in obedience to the popular demand, did re-assemble parliament, and Lord John Russell again proposed the Reform Bill—seriously modified indeed, but not essentially altered or injured, though certainly not improved. The change afforded its opponents a subject of taunt and triumph, without in the slightest degree softening their asperity, or conciliating their opposition. The bill itself was rendered more faulty as a legislative measure in point of expression and form by these repeated changes. Ambiguity and confusion crept into it—and the principles upon which its chief provisions rested became unintelligible to the excited people out of doors, and the object of successful attack by the enemies of the bill within.

The king in person, on the 6th of December, 1831, opened the parliament, and delivered a speech so worded as to prevent a division. He again recommended the reform of the representation to the consideration of parliament, and declared 'that a speedy and satisfactory settlement of the question becomes daily of more pressing importance to the security of the state, and to the contentment and welfare of my people.'

He then referred to and lamented the distress of the people in many parts of his dominions, and again brought the existence of the cholera in Sunderland under the notice of parliament, in order that proper precautions might be taken to prevent an extension of the malady.

The next subject mentioned in the speech was Ireland, and the systematic opposition that had been there made to the payment of tithes; and he recommended that the laws respecting tithe should be immediately inquired into, so that improvements might be adopted, and protection afforded to the church, and cause of complaint removed from the people.

Foreign affairs were then spoken of. Portugal, and the disputes and war between Dom Pedro and Dom Miguel; Holland and Belgium, and the treaty for their separation—(the non-ratification of which by Holland the king deplored, but hoped that his consent would soon be obtained)—and the convention with the French government respecting the slave trade—were all subjects of separate paragraphs, which stated in general

terms the peculiar circumstances connected with each, without expressing any opinion that could give rise to debate. The king then congratulated parliament and the country on the continuance of peace—and after the usual announcement respecting the estimates, he concluded by referring to the Bristol riots and to the political unions. The last were not mentioned by name, but spoken of 'as combinations which in their form and character were incompatible with all regular government.' 'I know,' the king was made to say, 'that I shall not appeal in vain to my faithful subjects to second my determined resolution to repress all illegal proceedings by which the peace and security of my dominions may be endangered.'[1]

The debates upon the address were of no importance —no division was taken—none but a verbal amendment was proposed (which was accepted by the

[1] This last paragraph of the speech was evidently suggested by the king himself, and to him suggested by those around him, who hated the Reform Bill, and therefore dreaded the combinations of the people, which could alone carry that measure. Every paragraph in the newspapers, every resolution of the various public meetings then being held, every violent speech and publication on the subject—all, and every one, were daily brought to the notice of the king, who constantly pressed and pestered his ministers to prosecute the writers and printers as seditious libellers; and ministers were in some cases obliged to yield against their better judgments, and in the case of Cobbett got most completely, not to say disgracefully, defeated. Still the object of the king's intimate advisers was obtained. He was made to hate the ministers and their Reform Bill more and more every day.

ministers) and the real conflict was reserved until the Reform Bill should be again proposed. Sir Charles Wetherell, indeed, in one of his roundabout, affected, but still amusing orations, endeavoured to defend himself from the aspersions cast upon him by various writers in the public press, who had accused him of rashness, and even wickedness, for presenting himself in his character of recorder of Bristol to the excited people of that unfortunate city, when he must have known—when, in fact, he did know, that his obnoxious presence would lead to riot and confusion. Sir Charles sought to shelter himself, by throwing the responsibility on the Home Office; and assuredly Lord Melbourne would have acted wisely had he at once forbad Sir Charles to make his usual entry into Bristol. Still there was great excuse, if not complete justification, for Lord Melbourne—none for Sir Charles himself. Had Lord Melbourne done as suggested, Sir Charles Wetherell and his party would have raved and ranted because of the injustice of such a proceeding. They would have called it a direct and studied insult, arising from party spite and hate, which they would have the more violently impugned, because it did not even share, but mischievously interfered with the administration of justice. But the fact was, that Sir Charles Wetherell despised the opinion of what he called the mob; he fancied that the people, taking that word in its large sense, cared little about the Reform Bill, and he was not sorry to have an opportunity of ostentatiously braving the anger of the

populace, and thus proving the truth of his opinion. On his arrival at Bristol, however, he learned his most fatal mistake; he found the populace furious, and the middle classes so angry as to withdraw themselves, and refuse him their protection. The consequence was not foreseen till the mischief had occurred. Peace and order are, in England, preserved by the middle class. The mere fact of their withholding their aid would, at any time, hand over the country as a prey to be disputed, by the soldiers on the one side, and the turbulent, and uneducated, and criminal portion of the mob on the other; riot and confusion necessarily follow whensoever the middle classes manifest this most dangerous apathy. Thus it happened at Bristol. The large majority of the educated classes in that town felt in unison with the populace as regarded Sir Charles Wetherell, and were evidently not sorry to see him heartily abused; and, had the result been simply his ignominious flight, they would have been exceedingly well pleased. But the fierce spirit of that turbulent mass of crime and misery, lying at the bottom of all large communities, once excited and let loose, could not be restrained within the bounds of prudence and order. They took advantage of the licence thus unwarily afforded them, and sought to satisfy their hate and their cupidity by plunder and devastation. The lesson thus given was painful, but wholesome. It taught both sections of the educated classes—the aristocracy on the one hand, the reforming party on the other—that they

were playing a game dangerous to the peace, the property, and thus to the happiness of society. The lesson was not lost. The king and his intimates were seriously alarmed; and we shall soon perceive the Duke of Wellington himself, a second time in his life, giving up his own opinions respecting our institutions, in obedience to the fiercely expressed wish of an excited people. Every one who sympathises with suffering, and who views scenes of devastation and bloodshed with horror and dismay, must lament the terrible tragedy of the Bristol riots. But looking back now, when the mischief has been long repaired, we can estimate the great uses of that solemn experience. It concentrated into one incident many of the horrors of revolutionary violence, and seriously alarmed the thinking men of all parties; and thus disposed them to look with complacency upon the modes of compromise which were suggested during the subsequent discussion; and, eventually, in no small degree contributed to the peaceful solution of the very difficult problem which the Reform Bill propounded to the practical wisdom of the statesmen of all parties.

Lord John Russell, on the 12th of December 1831, again moved for leave to bring in a bill to amend the representation of the people in England and Wales; and his manner, like his proposal, had again undergone a striking alteration. When he last proposed his measure, his opening speech was a song of triumph—the excitement and joyous enthusiasm of the people had placed his party and himself, as he fancied, beyond

the reach of danger;—keeping his eyes fixed only upon the opponents of the bill—upon the aristocracy, to whom it was obnoxious—fearing their attacks alone, he fancied, when he was safe from their assault, he was clear of all cause of alarm. He spoke on that occasion therefore in a tone of almost contemptuous triumph. Since that period, however, the people, being disappointed and thwarted of their wish, had become fierce and angry; and the noble lord and his friends began to tremble at their allies;—a change had evidently come over him, since his celebrated letter to the Birmingham Political Union. The feeling gradually stole upon him and his friends, that they had raised a too mighty spirit—one which would soon be unmoved by their exorcism—and which might in its fury destroy the whole order to which the noble lord and most of his colleagues belonged, making no distinction between friend and foe. He was therefore no longer anxious to excite and inflame;—his power, such as it was, he employed to allay resentment, and to lessen, not exaggerate, the expectation of benefit to be derived from the change he was proposing. He dwelt upon the danger of further delay, in a tone of real alarm. The topic was no longer a rhetorical weapon, with which he sought to assail and simply terrify his opponents, he being himself wholly free from alarm. He urged it now as a terrible truth—one appalling to himself and his friends; and, in accents of sincere, unsimulated affright, he besought his aristocratic opponents to forego their

resistance. To the people he said, you much exaggerate the benefits of this measure. The House of Lords he declared were startled by merely imaginary fears. For God's sake, said the noble lord, pass the bill, and let us get rid of it as soon as possible. He spoke of the Catholic question and its settlement, as an exact illustration of the present state of things. 'We all recollect,' said the noble lord, 'the great measure passed a few sessions ago—I mean the Catholic question. On that occasion, although I am and always have been convinced, that right, and reason, and political expediency were on one side, yet I think it cannot be denied that the immediate benefit to be derived from that measure for the people of Ireland, and the instant tranquillity that was expected to flow from it, were grossly exaggerated on the one hand;[1] whilst, on the other, there can be no doubt that the fears of the utter subversion of the established church, and of the renewal of persecution, were in like manner exaggerated. * * * * So I think in the instance of the reform question, no one will fail to allow that both the absurdities to be remedied, and the advantages to be derived from that remedy, are highly coloured on the one hand, and that

[1] When the Catholic question was the great party question of the day, the Whig opposition were furious with any one who presumed to make this statement: and they assailed with calumny and abuse everybody who endeavoured to show the Irish people that emancipation was not the infallible cure for all the ills of Ireland.

on the other, the dangers to the constitution, which it is said we are going to overturn, and to our established institutions, have been made the subject of merely imaginary fears.' Well might Sir Robert Peel inquire, when this confession was wrung from the spokesman of the terrified ministry—'Why, then, for so minute a benefit, did you run the risk of so great a danger?' not meaning thereby danger to the constitution, from the adoption of the changes proposed, but the danger which all now felt to be imminent, in consequence of the excited state of the public mind. Lord John Russell might have replied—'We did not create this excitement—we found, and took advantage of it.' This assertion would have been the truth; but a truth which he or his party had hitherto not liked to hear. They were parliamentary reformers in 1830, because the public feeling made the question of reform a good party weapon. They found the people excited, and they by their language and conduct not only kept that excitement alive, but fearfully increased it. They were now in an agony of terror at the result. They could not retreat, and trembled at the idea of going on.

Lord John Russell, after this strange exordium, proceeded to explain the further alterations and modifications of the original plan. That plan comprised, he said, four great principles—the first was to get rid of the nomination boroughs; the next was the enfranchisement of certain large and populous towns;

the third was giving additional members to large counties; and the fourth and last related to the right of voting, which they proposed to introduce into the boroughs and counties.

As respected disfranchisement, and the two Schedules A and B, the guide now to be proposed was confused and intricate. He said that the census of 1821, which had originally been the means of ascertaining what boroughs ought, what ought not, to be disfranchised, was faulty, and therefore a fallacious guide—that consequently a new plan had been adopted of ascertaining which boroughs should be deprived of the power of returning members to parliament.

'It was now proposed to settle the relative importance of the several boroughs, by a test which combined the number of persons, the number of houses, and the amount of assessed taxes paid by the borough, including therein the whole limits of the town. Under these circumstances,' said the noble lord, 'we have taken another test, which, combined with the test of houses, will give a more correct view of the importance of the boroughs. We have adopted this other test in order that we should not place towns with a number of mean low houses, in a situation of greater advantage than towns with a smaller number of better and more respectable houses. We have not taken the number of 10*l.* houses only, but the amount of assessed taxes up to the month of April of this year. To do this it was necessary for us to take the assessed

taxes paid by the whole town without regard to the exact limits of the borough.'[1] Lieutenant Drummond, upon the information obtained by the government as to the limits of the various boroughs, their population and the amount of assessed taxes they paid, made out 'a series of one hundred boroughs, beginning with the lowest, and taking the number of houses and the amount of their assessed taxes together as the bases of their relative importance.' From the estimation thus formed by Mr. Drummond of the relative importance of the boroughs in this series, Schedule A, as given in the Appendix, was framed.[2] The list of disfranchised boroughs differed necessarily from that formerly proposed, though the number of boroughs to be disfranchised was still to be the same—which was fifty-six. 'The consequence of taking Lieutenant Drummond's report as a basis for disfranchisement, and taking the same number, is, that some boroughs which formerly escaped disfranchisement as populous and large will now be placed in Schedule A, while others which are better towns in comparison will be taken out of that schedule, and be placed in

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[1] Hansard, 3rd series, vol. ix. p. 162. The *Mirror of Parliament* reports the statement of the noble lord somewhat differently—in fact, incorrectly. He is made to say, 'We have not taken the number of 10*l.* houses only, *but the number of houses rated to the assessed taxes.*'—Vol. i. 1832, p. 62. The *number* of the houses rated was not the point, but the amount of money paid. This amount, combined with the whole number of houses, constituted the adopted test.

[2] See Appendix C.

Schedule B.'[1] This schedule was to contain only thirty in place of forty-one boroughs, as provided by the last defeated measure. This diminution of Schedule B was the consequence of the change in the ministerial intentions regarding the number of the House of Commons, which was now to remain as in the unreformed House, 658. Consequently a larger number of members had to be distributed under the present than under the former scheme; and the most mischievous of all the proposed changes was the unfortunate result. A number of small boroughs, which under the first plan were to return only one member, were now to continue to return two, and were thus taken out of Schedule B. This schedule was the great blot of the bill even as originally framed; every borough in it ought to have been in Schedule A. The proposed change was unfortunately in precisely the opposite direction. Schedule B was diminished, not by putting the boroughs into Schedule A, but by leaving them wholly untouched. Twenty-three members had now to be distributed; ten were given to the largest towns placed in the original Schedule B, and one to Chatham, one to the county of Monmouth, and the rest to the large towns which by the former bill obtained power to return one member only. The thirty boroughs still retained in Schedule B are given in the Appendix.[2]

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[1] Hansard, vol. ix. p. 163.

[2] See Appendix C, and also Appendix D. In the original bill, Schedule A contained sixty boroughs, Schedule B forty-seven. The present Schedule A contained only fifty-six,

The new bill retained the 10*l.* qualification. 'I think,' said the noble lord, while explaining his present modification of this franchise, 'I think we have rendered this clause more simple, by proposing to enact that every person who occupies a house of the value of 10*l.* a year shall have the right of voting, provided he be rated. I do not mean that he should be rated at 10*l.* a year—for we all know how the rating varies in different places—but that he should be a person paying poor's rates; so that the only question will be, whether he occupies a house, warehouse, or shop, of the value of 10*l.*'[1]

Having thus explained the proposed alterations of the original plan, the noble lord closed his speech with a justification of the measure, upon the ground that it was merely an adaptation of our representative system to the increased intelligence and changed opinions of the age—an alteration similar to those which had been made in our code of laws, whether criminal, commercial, or ecclesiastical, since the peace of 1815—alterations which had either been proposed

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and Schedule B thirty. In spite of all these changes, Tavistock was still untouched. Had Schedule B contained forty-seven it would have included Tavistock. Lord John Russell, nevertheless, roundly asserted, that if any one said that this result was brought about unfairly, 'he will make an assertion utterly false and unfounded.' This insolent mode of getting rid of the objection was, perhaps, the best. It was short, and required only on the part of him who adopted it, a bold face and a saucy tongue.

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1832, vol. i. p. 63.

or sanctioned by Sir Robert Peel himself, in consequence of the desire expressed by the public for such amelioration of our general jurisprudence.

Sir Robert Peel followed the noble mover in the debate, and did not fail to take advantage of the opportunity which the proposed changes gave him of a triumph over the ministry. The changes adopted, he said, justified the opposition in all the steps they had taken. These changes he must assume to be improvements, but these would not have been attained without the delay which the conduct of the opposition had rendered necessary. Enumerating the several alterations which had been described by the noble lord, he asserted, that all and every one of them had been proposed by his side of the House and rejected —and he dwelt with peculiar complacency and satisfaction on the number 658 being retained. He was not prepared, he said, for such a sacrifice to the *manes* of the late parliament as the adoption of General Gascoyne's motion; and he augured, from the course now pursued by the government, a disposition on their parts to adopt still further amendments. The altered tone of the noble lord was too obvious a topic for sarcasm to escape so dexterous a debater as Sir Robert Peel; and he made the most of it. Coupling the statement of the noble lord, as to the exaggerated expectations of good from the proposed measure, with a *naïve* declaration by Lord Althorp during the former session, that ministers, when they proposed the Reform Bill, never expected to carry it, the right honourable

gentleman expressed his very natural wonder at the whole ministerial proceedings, and closed his bitter observations by stating his regret that the moderation now manifested by the ministers of the Crown had not always been pursued by them since their first dealing with the subject, and by declaring that he should still offer a reluctant but firm opposition to the principles of the bill.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer warmly asserted that Sir Robert Peel had utterly mistaken him, as he had never made the statement supposed. He had said, 'that from the impression which seemed to be made by the statements of my noble friend when he first brought the measure forward, the government had expected that if a division had at that period taken place, the bill would have been rejected; but though thus much is true, I beg entirely to deny that the government ever thought of proposing a measure they had no hopes of carrying.'[1] Lord Althorp, immediately after uttering these words, made a statement that completely justified the assertions above hazarded respecting the popular excitement on the subject of

[1] Yet the story which I have given above, p. 87, and which Lord Brougham is in the habit of relating, shows pretty clearly that the ministry expected defeat on the very night of the proposal, and before they could possibly know the effect produced by Lord John Russell's speech. It is notorious that the Whigs did not hope to retain power for three months; and their frail tenure of place was one reason assigned by Mr. Brougham for not accepting the office of Attorney-General, and refusing in the first instance the offer of the great seal.

reform. 'We did not take that step (viz., propose the Reform Bill) in consequence of any excitement we had produced ourselves: we took it, in consequence of the long-expressed and growing opinion of all the better informed portion of the community. There seems to be a difference of opinion on that point: now I will admit that when we came into office, we certainly did expect that that opinion would triumph; and in that way we may have been said to have caused the excitement; but on the other hand, that that expectation and wish existed in the country long before the formation of the present ministry, no one that will take the trouble to look to past events can for a moment doubt.'[1]

The remainder of the debate was merely a desultory conversation full of personal recrimination. The alterations gave, as was to be expected, offence to the Irish members, because the difference between the representation of England and Ireland was to be nearly as great as ever. Mr. Hume joined in this complaint. The tone of Lord John Russell, however, had evidently produced an effect upon some members of the opposition, and there appeared a growing desire to arrange differences by compromise. To the sincere reformers out of doors this idea of compromise was exceedingly

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1832, vol. i. p. 66. This speech seems to be incorrectly reported. The sense can, however, be safely guessed at. The noble lord was not an accurate speaker, and may possibly have thus imperfectly explained his meaning. The fault would in that case be his, and not the reporter's.

disagreeable. Compromise and concession, they believed, meant the same thing, and to any concession they were bitterly hostile. Though parties in the House of Commons were tired of the present conflict, the people were still eager and expectant. For them, as yet, nothing had been gained. They saw that every change diminished, in some degree, the efficiency of the original bill; and there appeared as yet no sign of lessened hostility to the measure in those members of the House of Commons who were supposed to speak the sentiments of the House of Lords. Suspicion, too, was rife as to the courage and sincerity of many members of the cabinet, which the whole tenour of the debate on the re-proposal of the bill served rather to increase than diminish.

On the 16th of December, Lord Althorp moved the second reading of the bill, when the opposition quickly proved to the administration the futility of the late attempts to conciliate or please them. Lord Porchester at once moved that the bill be read that day six months, in a speech which in its spirit was as hostile as any which had been delivered during the long contest on the bill. His motion was supported by Sir Edward Sugden, who visited the House with the dismal infliction of a dreary exposition by a Chancery lawyer, of his views on a great political question. The succeeding scenes were remarkable and important.

Mr. Macaulay had evidently come prepared with an attack upon Sir Robert Peel, in consequence of

the taunting speech delivered by that right honourable gentleman, when leave to bring in the bill was moved for by Lord John Russell. In the course of remarks upon the conduct of the opposition, Mr. Macaulay expressed his surprise at the sneers with which Sir Robert Peel had greeted the changes introduced into the bill. Sir Robert had said: Behold! these changes we suggested! they have at length been accepted. And hereupon he had certainly indulged himself in uttering many bitter taunts and reproaches. Mr. Macaulay, in reply, met wonder with wonder, and taunt with taunt. Suppose the ministers have deserted their own opinions, and adopted yours — are you, said he, addressing the opposition, and more particularly its leader, are you the persons entitled to be triumphant because of such an event? 'Sir, I have heard of an opposition which took a very different tone. I remember an opposition which, after labouring on for years, after seeing every plan and every suggestion of their own out-voted by the government, after suffering much in their own feelings in order to prepare the production of great improvements in our national laws and institutions, raised no shout of triumph or exultation, indulged in no ungenerous charges of unworthy recrimination, when it saw its recommendations and plans and suggestions justified by their subsequent adoption on the part of the government of the day. And when they saw their principles of free-trade, of jurisprudence, and foreign

policy, and of religious liberty, become successively the recognised principles of government, that opposition was content to say 'Ay,' even at the eleventh hour. The individuals of whom it (the government) was composed, received the reward due to those who had toiled through the heat and labour of the fight, with sincere and disinterested devotion to the great public cause in which they had embarked. There was one occasion on which the situation of the right honourable baronet opposite, and my noble friend, the Paymaster of the Forces, were reversed—when, in the course of a single day, the whole of the views and policy of the late government were changed with respect to the Test and Corporation Acts. Did my noble friend, or any one on this side of the House, then utter anything about *palinodias*, or praise his own wisdom by vainly sneering at the course which had been previously adopted by his opponents? My noble friend felt no sorrow, he expressed no regret, when he saw the glory due to Grattan and to Romilly transferred to less glorious champions. I must own, however, that I did hear with surprise a member of the late government make it a subject of taunt upon the present ministry, that they had adopted the suggestions of the opposition.'[1]

This observation aroused the anger of Sir Robert Peel, who did not, however, reply to it on that night. Mr. Croker took upon himself the task, and as usual

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1832, vol. i. p. 144.

followed Mr. Macaulay in the debate. His speech, however, could hardly be considered a reply; being nothing but a ranting repetition of all his former dismal prophecies, which time has already falsified. The Reform Bill has not led, is not likely to lead, to violent revolution. The House of Lords remains, the monarchy still flourishes, profound peace and unrivalled security are the happy heritage of the people; property has not been invaded and divided by a dominant furious and ignorant mob; neither have any of our useful and time-honoured institutions been destroyed. Steady, peaceful, wary improvements are indeed being proposed, and gradually adopted. The industrious habits of our people are still retained; and that reverential obedience to the law, which has marked out for many ages the English race as one peculiar, and happily distinguished from most others now existing, is still their honourable characteristic. It is now clear that the ex-Secretary of the Admiralty was but a denizen among the English people;—and knowing little or nothing of their character or their feelings, was wholly unable to prophesy correctly concerning their future destinies.

The language, however, of Sir Robert Peel upon this occasion (he closed the debate on the 17th), and the error of his anticipations, will be to posterity a subject of much greater interest, and far greater surprise, than the doleful expectancies of Mr. Croker. The mistakes of the right honourable baronet are indeed a somewhat humiliating spectacle for the pride

of human wisdom. That a man, who is without doubt among the chief statesmen of his day, should have thus egregiously misapprehended the meaning and value of the circumstances by which he was surrounded—should consequently have formed anticipations as to the future effects of the changes then proposed which have in no one instance been fulfilled, does indeed shake our faith in the authority of great men, and does sometimes induce us to look upon their wisdom as foolishness.

Sir Robert, in reply to Mr. Macaulay's taunt, evinced, what with him is not uncommon, much unsatisfactory dexterity. The phrase may appear paradoxical—it is, however, perfectly accurate. None but a clever and dexterous speaker could have so dealt with an opponent's observations and arguments. But though the hearer was surprised, his understanding was not convinced. Mr. Macaulay said: Your proceeding is ungenerous. You say we have adopted your views; and you taunt us, because of our change and acquiescence. We, when you did really what you *say* we have now done, pursued a different course. We were glad to see the good we desired effected; and did not murmur when the glory which really belonged to us, who had toiled through the heat of the day, was at length carried off by our opponents suddenly adopting our opinions; neither did we taunt you, or triumph over your *palinodias*. Sir Robert Peel's answer to this was: When I went over to your opinion, you agreed with me on the question

of catholic emancipation; but I, unfortunately, differ from you on the question of parliamentary reform. But this had nothing to do with the observation of Mr. Macaulay. The subjects on which the change of opinion had occurred were the details of the bill. The changes adopted, Sir Robert Peel said, were all suggested by the opposition; therefore, on the very matter of which they were speaking, there was, according to him, perfect agreement. Hereupon he indulged in taunts, and laid himself fairly open to Mr. Macaulay's reply.

But Sir Robert Peel took this occasion to defend, at great length, his conduct with reference to catholic emancipation; and the defence was in all respects triumphant, though hardly called for by the preceding incidents of the debate.

The most remarkable statement, however, made by the right honourable gentleman on that occasion, was on the subject of the small boroughs sending members to parliament, and the probable character of the House of Commons under the Reform Act.

'I believe,' he said, 'that the safety of property is involved in the maintenance of the small boroughs. * * * What I apprehend is a want of that respect for property which will shake confidence in its permanent accumulation.'* * * Again he said, 'I do not say they (the 10*l.* householders) will be guilty of confiscation, but from not respecting existing institutions in the same degree as the present class of electors, they will shake the confidence of the possessors of property, and

will pursue a course which must tend to consequences almost as bad as confiscation!'[1] Such an assertion coming from such a man, shows the utter separation existing in England between the various classes of its society. The 10*l.* householders have proved, and will continue to prove themselves the most conservative class of the whole community, as respects property and the rights connected with it. Let a time of real pressure come upon the great landed proprietors, and we shall find the fundholder dependent for his safety upon the much calumniated 10*l.* householder.

The closing remarks of Sir Robert Peel on this occasion were of good augury for the passing of the bill. He blew hot and cold with the same breath; thus proving to those who, from his past conduct, had obtained the key to his mental and moral character, that he was about, in fact, to give up his opposition.

'I say nothing of the justice of this general measure of reform which is proposed to you, *but if it be intended ultimately to concede, I say, give way at once.* I do not say it is right in them to give way to the popular demand, because it is popular; but I do urge the government not to leave Ireland a prey to the agitators by whom she is infested; nor to do anything that may tend to keep up the unhappy state of excitement that prevails in that country. *If it be intended to give way, yield while you can have the credit of a*

[1] *Mirror Parliament*, 1832, vol. i. p. 190.

graceful concession; and do not let it be supposed that you have been unwillingly compelled to grant whatever you ultimately give.'

This remarkable suggestion related apparently to the proportion to be maintained between the members of the English and Irish members. But the advice was idle if the bill were to be successfully opposed; and the advice, if good for the ministers, was of still greater importance with respect to the conduct of the majority in the Lords. They seemed to be advised by the sidelong suggestion to yield at once, and while they might have the credit of 'a graceful concession.'

But the right honourable gentleman added, with strange inconsistency—'I will oppose to the last; convinced that, though my opposition will be unavailing, it will not be fruitless, because the opposition now made will be a bar to further concessions. If the whole House were now to join in giving way, it would have just so much the less power to resist future changes. On this ground, therefore, I take my stand, not opposed to any well-considered reform of any of our institutions which the well-being of the country demands, but opposed to this reform of our constitution, because it shatters the feelings of respect towards it, which are founded in prejudice perhaps, or in higher feelings of veneration for all our institutions. I believe that the present Reform Bill will do this, and I will wield all the power I possess to oppose the gradual progress of that spirit of democracy to which the honourable and learned gentleman (Mr. Macaulay)

thinks we ought gradually to yield; for, if we make these concessions, they will only lead to the supremacy of that principle. We may, I know, make it supreme —we may be enabled to establish a republic, full, I have no doubt, of energy—splendid, I have no doubt, with talent, but fatal to our mixed form of government, and ultimately destructive of all those usages and practices which have long preserved to us a large share of peace and prosperity, and have made and preserved this the proudest kingdom whose existence can be traced in the annals of the world.'[1]

The division showed the increased strength of the popular feeling—the

Ayes being	324
Noes	162
Majority	162

The House of Commons was now adjourned to the 17th of January.[2] On the 19th of that month, the

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[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1832, vol. i. p. 191.

[2] The following is an epitome of the legislative history of the bill in the Commons from this period:—Jan. 19, 1832, Scotch and Irish Bills were brought in.—Jan. 20, House went into committee on the English Bill.—March 10, Committee on English Bill ended; ordered to report; report presented.—March 14, Consideration of report.—March 19, Third reading moved.—March 22, Read a third time.

Ayes	355
Noes	239
Majority	116

Passed.

Irish Reform Bill was brought in by Mr. Stanley—the Scotch Bill by the Lord Advocate; and, on the 20th, the House resolved itself into committee in order, for the second time, to go through the laborious task of considering the English bill clause by clause. This labour continued till the 10th of March, almost without interruption. Every word of the bill was canvassed as pertinaciously, and with as much asperity, as before; Sir Charles Wetherell, Sir Edward Sugden, and more especially Mr. Croker, being signally active and untiring in their opposition. The various topics of discussion gave rise to much animated debate, and not seldom to acrimonious altercation. The new basis upon which the proposed disfranchisement was to rest, from its very nature, afforded the opposition many opportunities of attack, and charges of unfairness were constantly preferred without much of reality or truth to support the accusation. The opposition, indeed, was peculiarly unscrupulous; every proposition which could give trouble, or create difficulty, was eagerly supported; and whoever proposed anything that was not in the bill found favour with the opposition, provided always that his suggestion was not accepted by the government. The quiet temper of Lord Althorp, and the impassive nature of Lord John Russell, stood them and their measure in good stead under this long and tiresome and captious discussion; while the violence and intemperate language of Mr. Croker rendered ineffective all the efforts of his extraordinary industry, pertinacity, and skill. Of the

many suggestions made [illegible] only require to be particularly noticed, the one, because it strikingly illustrated the difficulties of the administration—the other, because it evinced the real feelings of the opposition.

Mr. Shiel, when the fifty-six boroughs of Schedule A had been selected, proposed to add five other boroughs to the list, beginning first with Petersfield. Mr. Shiel's object was to have a means of adding to the number of the Irish and Scotch members, without adding to the numbers of the House; and this could only be done by disfranchising a larger number than fifty-six of the small boroughs. To justify his proposal, he compared Amersham, the last borough on the ministerial list, with Petersfield, and showed, in every particular, upon the principles adopted by the ministers themselves, that the one borough was as unfit to send representatives as the other. The answer given by the Chancellor of the Exchequer was short and straightforward. 'As a reformer, I am unable to combat your arguments. They are unanswerable as matters of reasoning. My only reply is, that your proposal is impolitic. I state now,' he said, 'as I stated before, that it will be more prudent not to create unnecessary opposition to the great measure of reform, by carrying the principle of disfranchisement further than the list has now carried it. I shall therefore oppose the motion of the learned gentleman.'[1]

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[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1832, vol. i. p. 803.

Sir Robert Peel seized upon the opportunity which this candid avowal offered. He had throughout declared that he feared this bill could not be final—that it was only the commencement of change which, once begun, could not be arrested. The declaration of Lord Althorp, he now asserted, proved that his own fears were well founded. Make this bill law, said Sir Robert, in substance, and you will immediately have another following it, based upon the irresistible arguments of the honourable and learned member for Louth. The opposition shouted and cheered and praised Mr. Shiel, in the hope of inducing him to proceed, as, by so doing, they believed they should be able to embarrass the ministry, whose real difficulty was caused by the fierce resistance of these very persons who now cheered Mr. Shiel, while proposing a wider disfranchisement than was attempted by the bill. Mr. Shiel very wisely refused to be cajoled by the enemies of reform, and withdrew his motion.

The other proposed amendment was that of Lord Chandos, who moved to omit the metropolitan districts from the enfranchising Schedule C. 'Give the inhabitants of those districts votes,' said the noble lord, 'but add them to the places already returning members. We fear the class of members that the 10*l.* householders of the metropolis will send to parliament.' Lord Chandos was the great champion of the agricultural interest, and he who proposed that the 50*l.* tenants of the landlords should have votes, wished to prevent the inhabitants of large towns exercising any

influence in the House of Commons. The two proposals were eminently consistent and significant.

On the 10th of March the labours of the committee ended. The bill as amended was reported,[1] and ordered to be taken into consideration on the 14th of the same month of March. The third reading being moved on the 19th, again, and for the last time, a fierce debate took place upon the whole bill, and the division that followed comprised the actual strength of the two contending parties; the numbers being—

Ayes	355
Noes	239
Majority	116

Again, public attention became fixed upon the House of Lords. The proceedings and declarations of individual peers proved that a great change had occurred in the feelings of some at least of those who

[1] Mr. Croker, on March 14, upon a motion for taking into further consideration the Report of the Committee, moved certain resolutions as an amendment, for the purpose of placing upon the Journals of the House 'the opinions that actuated himself and several of his friends in the discussion of the question.' Lord Althorp called these resolutions a pamphlet, and not unreasonably complained of this method of printing a work at the expense of the nation. Sir Charles Wetherell observed that he was certainly no friend to paper speeches, though he made an exception in this instance. The whole paper was a minute criticism of the details of the Bill, and exhibited certainly the want of symmetry which disfigured it. But, had the bill been more consistent it would have been a more effective reform, and just as displeasing to Mr. Croker as this faulty enactment.

had united to defeat the former bill, and gave hopes of a different course being about to be adopted on the present occasion.

The popular excitement had never for one moment flagged. In spite of reiterated assertions by the enemies of reform, that the interest taken by the country in the ministerial proposal had seriously declined, that interest had hourly increased, and the *temper* of the nation alone had changed. The nation —that is, an immense majority of the whole people— a majority of the wealthy, intelligent, and instructed, as well as the poor and laborious millions, called the working classes—had now resolved to have the Reform Bill—they had resolved also to have it by peaceful means, if possible, but if that were not possible, by FORCE. That such was the state of the public feeling was believed by a very large portion of the opponents of the measure; and the king was sensibly alive to the danger that was now hanging over the peace of the country, the existence of the House of Lords, and possibly over the monarchy itself. The negotiation which Sir Herbert Taylor had entered into, in consequence of the king's alarms, with Lord Wharncliffe, was soon made manifest in its effects.[1] The changes made in the

[1] These proceedings naturally gave great offence to the Tory party, and excited their suspicion in no small degree, and called forth very angry remarks. The Duke of Wellington, whose want of skill as a speaker renders his speeches invaluable, as they really are exact transcripts of his mind, said, during the debate which followed, on the second reading, 'My lords, the

bill afforded a ground or pretext for a change of conduct. The original bill had proceeded on the principle of population—the present one professed to be guided by a compound principle of property and population. The measure, therefore, was no longer that pure result of democracy which had rendered the former bill so offensive. Such was the reasoning employed by several persons, and several peers among the number, as a justification for the support which they now resolved to give the bill. Lord Wharncliffe, the Bishop of London, and Lord Harrowby all openly declared that they should vote for the second reading of the bill, now again sent to the House of Lords by the House of Commons, and which had been passed by increased majorities.

Of the many curious intrigues that were at this moment carried on, the history cannot now be learned, perhaps it may never be disclosed; but we may make a guess at some of them, from the outward conduct of those concerned. There can be no doubt that a certain portion of the opposition believed it possible to throw out the present bill, or so to mutilate it, as to make the result equivalent to a ministerial defeat. They hoped thereupon to be able to frame a new administration, which should promise a reform of a more modified and temperate character, and so satisfy

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noble lords have been trying a compromise for these last six months. If they have made no progress in effecting a compromise, what encouragement can they hold out to me and others to follow them upon this occasion?'

the people;—the result of the whole proceeding being to oust Lord Grey and all the more forward reformers in his cabinet—to put on one side Sir Robert Peel and the Duke of Wellington, and obtain the government for themselves.

When Lord Wharncliffe and Lord Harrowby stated that they intended to vote for the second reading of the bill, they said that they should so act, with the full intention of striking from the bill those parts of it which they deemed the most obnoxious. They confessed that in the present state of the popular feeling, some reform was absolutely necessary, and must be granted—that they who refused to make any concession could no longer govern the country upon that principle, and that conciliation and concession were now needed to preserve the peace of the country, and maintain its institutions. The 9th of April was the day fixed for the second reading—before that day private communications of his intentions had been made by Lord Wharncliffe to Lord Grey—first through Sir Herbert Taylor—next through Lord Palmerston; and attempts had been also made to divide the cabinet itself. The Lord Chancellor was by some of those who were busy at this time supposed to be really displeased with many parts of the bill—more particularly with the disfranchising parts of it—his own plan not having, as was supposed, contained anything like Schedule A; and he having said in the Lords, that in some particulars the bill went further than he approved, although he had permitted Lord Grey to

assert that the bill had the unanimous assent of the cabinet. The Duke of Buckingham evidently acted upon considerations of the sort here described when he gave notice on the 9th of April—just before the debate on the second reading commenced—that he intended, 'if, as he believed they would, the Lords threw out the bill, to bring in a bill himself, to amend the representation of England and Wales, the object of which will be to give the right of sending two members each to parliament to large towns therein to be specified, which, from their commercial and trading situations, may appear to have become entitled to be represented in parliament, and which are not now represented; and also to consolidate certain of the boroughs now sending members to parliament, so as to make room, without altering the numbers of the present House of Commons, for the members proposed to be added to the representations of the large towns as aforesaid; and also to extend the right of voting to all boroughs to be therein specified, in such manner as, without depriving any person of his franchise who now possesses one, may prevent any individual from unduly influencing the election of members of parliament within the said borough.' The Duke of Buckingham had during the recess addressed a letter to the king on the subject of the Reform Bill, and Lord Chandos one to Sir Herbert Taylor on the same subject. The Duke asserted that he was constitutionally justified in thus giving advice to his Majesty, and evidently hoped to create a difference between the king

and his ministers, and thereby to lead to the formation of another cabinet, which might bring in and carry a modified and more moderate measure of reform. The king sent the letter to Lord Grey, who showed it to his colleagues, but to no one else. The *Times* newspaper was said to have contained soon after not merely the substance of this letter, but some of the passages verbatim.[1] Rumour at the time suggested that this cabinet secret had been divulged by Lord Durham; and during the debate on the Reform Bill in the Lords, the Bishop of Exeter gave very significant hints as to the public opinion and belief, and his own on this subject. This led Lord Durham to give a most violent and direct contradiction to the insinuation. Thereupon the bishop shuffled, and laid himself open to the charge of having indulged in a jesuitical proceeding. The bishop evidently meant very plainly to charge Lord Durham with this breach of confidence, but had not courage to stand by the charge, which he had not scrupled to insinuate.

That the Duke of Buckingham hoped to break up the existing, in order to form another cabinet, was proved by his advances to the Lord Chancellor, made, because he supposed the Chancellor and his colleagues at variance. This opinion was shared by many others. Dissension was supposed to have followed the first

[1] This was untrue, however. It merely alluded to the communication in vague terms, and never pretended to set forth the terms.

defeat of the Reform Bill, and the Chancellor was thought to have attributed that defeat to the extravagant provisions of the plan proposed. The Duke of Buckingham believing that these dissensions existed—that the Lord Chancellor disapproved of many parts of the bill, and that he would not be sorry to see a less sweeping measure substituted for the ministerial plan, addressed him with the evident belief that he might be won over to a moderate party who were willing to concede some reform—who thought indeed some reform was now a matter of necessity, but who fancied that a much less extensive change would be amply sufficient to satisfy the public, without alarming the great body of the peers who resisted the bill of Lord Grey. The advances of the noble Duke were not, however, of any effect, as the sequel served to prove. Still the attempt to win the Chancellor and separate him from his colleagues was made—and made because he was believed already to be at variance with them on the great question of the Reform Bill, which had been proposed with his full concurrence.

Lord Grey, when he again moved the second reading of the bill on the 9th of April, was aware of the division in the ranks of his opponents, and appeared confident as to the result. He naturally dwelt upon the almost universal admission on the part of the opposition that some reform was necessary, and took advantage of the notice given by the Duke of Buckingham in order to make apparent the absolute identity of the *principles* contained in the measure proposed, and

those which were set forth in the notice which the Duke of Buckingham had that evening given. That notice contained the principle of enfranchisement, so did the proposed bill—that notice contained the principle of an enlarged suffrage, so did the bill. The comparison instituted by the noble lord was complete, and the argument he desired to deduce from it was not forced or improbable—it was, that the opposition was not to the measure proposed, but to those who proposed it—and that they who, holding the opinions of the Duke of Buckingham, still opposed the ministerial measure, were not so much afraid of the effects of the Reform Bill, as desirous of the offices held by those who had framed it.

After explaining in what the present measure differed from the former one, and insisting upon the equal efficiency of the new plan, Lord Grey alluded to the condition of the public mind, and warned the House not to believe that the people were at all less earnest now than they had been. He advised their lordships not to be deceived by the quiet of the nation, and not to imagine that the cause of the popular silence and apparent apathy was a want of interest in the measure. 'I fear rather,' he said, 'that the cause is to be found in the diminished hope that such applications here' (viz., by petition) 'will be successful—from an increasing persuasion that we do not sympathise with the people—from a prevailing belief that our own separate interests are more considered by us than those of the people at large. Such

a belief, I am sure is erroneous; and I trust it will receive a satisfactory contradiction from the vote of this night.'[1]

He then pressed upon the consideration of the House, the dangers of delay; and while professing to deprecate all intention of intimidation, did his best to prove there was good cause for alarm. The immediate object of Lord Grey was to persuade the majority to pass the second reading, in order that they might deal with the bill in committee, stating however, very fairly, that he would not suffer any mutilation of the measure, or any diminution of its efficiency. Dwelling upon the probable mischiefs of a rejection of the bill, he spoke of the actual evil already incurred by delay, in the general stagnation of trade, which had resulted from the long contests respecting it. For this mischief he declared that he and his colleagues were not answerable, because they had not created either the wish for reform or the excitement connected with it. This assertion was denied throughout the succeeding debate by the opposition; and the charge and the defence upon this point formed the chief topic of discussion: the opposition asserting that the whole excitement, and therefore the whole mischiefs resulting from it, were the work of the administration; the speeches in support and defence of the administration, on the other hand, as vehemently asserting that when they came into office they had no alternative. The

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1832, vol. ii. p. 1665.

Duke of Wellington they said was driven from power because he had declared against all reform—that he was unable to retain the government when he resigned—and they who succeeded him found the country absolutely in insurrection, and in a state of exasperation only to be allayed by a promise of a change in the representation. In such a condition of things, said Lord Grey and his friends, we believed a substantial and efficient reform the only wise and safe course: an illusory and pretended change would not have satisfied the desires of the people, nor allayed their anger, nor put down commotion. All these things the bill has already done. But if rejected, 'a personal responsibility,' said Lord Grey, in conclusion, 'rests upon me, which perhaps never was before sustained by any former minister; I may sink under it—that is nothing; I shall have the support of an approving conscience, which has always instructed me to do what is right, and to leave the consequences to God. What I pray for is, that I may be the only victim, and that the consequences of my failure may affect neither the prosperity nor the peace of my country, nor that union between your lordships and the people in which the welfare of both—and what is necessary to the welfare of both—your lordships' authority and character and usefulness—essentially depend.'

Lord Ellenborough, nothing daunted by the threatened dangers, moved that the bill be read that day six months. He proceeded most unceremoniously

and with great acrimony to discuss the bill, and the motives of its authors. For the purpose of ascertaining these, he dissected the majority by which it was supported in the Commons—and if we place side by side an observation which fell from him while so doing, and one that Lord Lyndhurst hazarded, we shall certainly obtain an accurate and vivid conception of the temper of the opposition, and the sort of accusations which, when angered, they did not scruple to bring against their political opponents; and we shall also be able to account for the violent and untiring opposition maintained by the Tory party to this proposal of the Whig administration.

'It is said,' observed Lord Ellenborough, 'that the measure now comes before your lordships, recommended by a great majority of the House of Commons, and backed by the support of the people. Before we act on such a ground, it is desirable that we should see of what that majority, and the support by which it has been created, are composed. It the first place, it includes the whole Whig body as it has long existed in the two Houses of Parliament, and all its adherents either from interest, connexion, or opinion. That body appears now to be tolerably unanimous, though it was known that five years ago they were so far from being agreed upon the principles of reform, that with the exception of the noble Earl now at their head, and a very few of his immediate personal adherents, the whole of that body went over to Mr. Canning, who declared that he would oppose reform

to the last hour of his life. Now I think there is one suggestion that must occur to every man's mind on this point, and it is this—that this party having been out of office so long, and without much regret having been manifested by the people, it may be just possible that they are aiming, through thus administering to the popular passions, to draw the people into a reconciliation, and so obtain power for themselves for many successive years.' Lord Lyndhurst, in precisely the same spirit, declared on the last night of the debate—'It has been supposed, that this measure is founded on party views and party feelings. I know the noble Earl to be utterly incapable of being so influenced, and I beg to be understood as insinuating no such thing.' In parliamentary discussion such a disclaimer is ever the immediate precursor of a direct personal imputation—and so it proved upon the present occasion. 'But this I will say,' said the noble speaker instantly, 'that if his only object had been to crush for ever his political opponents, and to perpetuate his own power, no course could possibly have been adopted that was better calculated to effect that purpose than the present.'[1] If the opposition really believed that such would be the effect of the measure, the fierceness of their opposition to it becomes explicable. They fancied they saw before them a life of hopeless exclusion from office—and the calamity of a downright revolution could hardly be greater.

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, p. 1810.

But the Whigs who proposed this fatal measure were not more the cause of anger, in the breasts of the opposition, than were those wavering lords, who enabled the ministers to carry it. Lord Ellenborough therefore wound up his elaborate attack on the bill with a warm objurgation of his vacillating friends. 'If,' said he, addressing those of his own side of the House who proposed to vote for the second reading, 'if when you have in substance concurred with his Majesty's government in encouraging the mad expectations of the people—when you have associated yourselves with them in keeping up that delusive hope of future advancement to be derived from a measure from which no good can come—when you have aggravated every difficulty which the government created for themselves by the original proposition of this measure, by pledging yourself to its monstrous principle, how are you, on the third reading of this bill, to turn round to the people and say—We cannot do exactly what you desire, and this bill you shall not have? My lords, that would be much more than throwing out this bill on the question, that it be read a second time.'[1]

The old friends of Mr. Canning were moved by the sarcasms of Lord Ellenborough to give some account of their change of opinion, and some justification of their sudden desertion of their cherished principles, which their chief had so often, and so vehemently defended.

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[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1832, vol. ii. p. 1668.

Lord Melbourne spoke for himself and partners on this somewhat suspicious conversion—and certainly the explanation was remarkably in accordance with the nonchalant character of the noble lord who gave it. As for the measure itself, he declared that he believed that the expectations of any great or immediate benefit from it were wholly fallacious—and that he had never held out any such hopes to the people—but the people were determined to have the measure—that was evident, and therefore the best thing to do was to let them have it, and as soon as possible.' That the small knot of politicians who had quarrelled with the Duke of Wellington, and in a body separated themselves on personal grounds from his administration, should simultaneously and suddenly become convinced that concession to the popular wish upon the question of parliamentary reform was a matter of vital necessity, was indeed 'a strange coincidence.' We may, however, be permitted to believe that if Mr. Huskisson had not been ignominiously ejected from the cabinet of the Duke of Wellington, his friends would still have remained in alliance with the military premier, and with their minds unable to perceive the overwhelming necessity to which they now yielded an assent so ready and so suspicious.

The important declarations of the debate, however, were those made by such noble lords as were now about to support in place of opposing the measure at this stage of its progress. The first of these converts who addressed the House was Lord Haddington, who,

together with Lord Harrowby and Lord Wharncliffe, had taken the lead in the opposition manifested upon the former occasion. Lord Wharncliffe then made the motion now made by Lord Ellenborough, and the chief assault upon the bill was headed and maintained by the three noble lords by whose aid chiefly it was now to be carried.

The explanation given by Lord Haddington was curious. Upon the occasion of the former bill, he stated that in spite of his having all his life been opposed to reform, he was nevertheless much inclined to have voted for the bill when first proposed in the Lords by Lord Grey, but was prevented, and only prevented, by finding that there was no chance of carrying it. He added, however, that besides his feeling of hopelessness as to success, was that of indignation, to induce him to oppose the bill—indignation because there had been an attempt to intimidate the House of Lords. But all that was then offensive had been changed—there was now no intimidation attempted, and he had great reason to believe that a majority would be found in favour of the bill. There was no re-action, he said, in the country, although there was certainly less excitement. He believed, indeed, that the people were heartily tired of the bill, but determined nevertheless to have it, and only wanted their lordships to improve it. This he proposed to do in committee, and for this heap of contradictory reasons he determined to support the second reading. 'Looking,' said the noble lord, in concluding his speech, 'looking at the state of

the country, and the necessity which they all felt, and which no man would deny, that parliament must to a certain extent be reformed, 'where was the use on the part of their lordships of a second time resisting the second reading of the Reform Bill?'[1]

Lord Wharncliffe took the same view, and from his character, which was that of a man of practical sagacity and every-day wisdom, he obtained a great power over the minds of the noble lords around him. He asserted that the bill must be read a second time, unless the House was prepared to meet much greater difficulties than any which they had hitherto encountered; and he did not leave the House in doubt as to the sort of evils to which he thus alluded. He declared that the Duke of Wellington, from long absence from England—an absence caused by his great utility to his country in war abroad, was unable to judge of the feelings of the people at home; while I, said the noble lord, have passed my life in the midst of the great and busy population of the north, and know that the desire for a reform in parliament has not only not at any time ceased, but has at every period gone on increasing in intensity and power;—he therefore warned the House of Lords of the danger they ran, the responsibility they incurred, by delaying the second reading of the proposed bill; and he solemnly assured them that the defeat of the measure in their House would endanger the peace of the country, and

[1] Hansard, 3rd Series, vol. xii. p. 68.

risk the very existence of every institution in the kingdom, no matter how sacred, ancient, or useful.

The course pursued by this section of peers naturally provoked animadversion, together with constant reference to the opinions expressed by them during the debate on the preceding bill. To these taunts and personal appeals no effective answer was publicly given, because the real reason of the change in their conduct was not avowed by the noble lords in question. Allusions were, indeed, made to it, and Lord Lyndhurst employed the topic against the measure, as well as against the conduct of those whose opinions respecting it had so suddenly changed. He stated that he well knew the difficulties pressing upon Lord Grey. 'I know,' he exclaimed, 'that not a day has passed that he has not been assailed for not giving way to the popular cry, and taking means to control the decisions of this House. My lords, the noble Earl knew this House too well to think of resorting to such a course. No man who knows the House, would think of resorting to such a course. The noble Earl well knew that he could not follow up this advice—that he could not pack this House; but the proposition that he should do so—nay, the very measure of this bill, as well as the means recommended to carry it, showed the kind of feeling by which the party urging on the noble Earl are governed. I will do the noble Earl the justice to believe that he never could have intended to have recourse to such a measure.'[1] The eagerness of

[1] Hansard, 3rd Series, vol. xii. p. 434. The king was at this time known to have consented to create peers, for the purpose of

this iteration only proved the anxiety of the learned lord upon the subject. He knew, and his party also, that however reluctant Lord Grey might be to swamp the House of Lords (such was the phrase then used), he would be compelled to adopt this mode of carrying the bill, if the Lords continued obstinate in their opposition to it. To retain the old constitution of the House of Commons, and preserve the public peace, had now become utterly impossible. The people had made up their minds to have the proposed measure of reform, and were quite prepared, as the sequel showed, to adopt stringent, and even violent means to attain it. Lord Grey, in the concluding sentences of his reply upon the whole debate, significantly alluded to the state of public opinion—to the danger of thwarting its expectations, and his own determination, and that of his government, 'to exert themselves to the last, and to use all the constitutional means in their power for the preservation of the public tranquillity.'[1] He did not leave the House in doubt as to what he intended by this warning phrase, but at once openly spoke 'of the prerogative of the Crown to make

passing the second reading. Lord Wharncliffe and others knowing this, having in fact convinced themselves by correspondence with Sir H. Taylor, that such consent had been given, voted for the second reading—thus, as they fancied, averting the dreaded evil, and forwarding their scheme for getting rid of the administration. The king evidently assisted in this part of the plot.

[1] Hansard, 3rd Series, vol. xii. p. 452. *Mirror of Parliament*, 1832, vol. ii. p. 1815.

peers, to which allusion had been made;' and gave the House to understand that a case might arise in which to employ such a prerogative would be perfectly justifiable, and within the spirit and letter of the constitution—and he entreated the House to pass the bill before them, and thus relieve him from a very painful necessity. The House shewed its sense of the sincerity of this appeal, and the statement with which it was accompanied, by passing the second reading by a majority of nine. The numbers being:—

Contents present . .	128 . .	Proxies, 56 . . .	184
Non-contents present .	126 . .	Proxies, 49 . . .	175
		Majority	9

The Duke of Wellington, in consequence of this vote, entered an elaborate protest against the bill upon the journals of the House of Lords; to which protest seventy-three peers attached their signatures.

The dangers of the bill, however, were far from over, and the next move of the opposition party in the Lords not only endangered the bill, but also the existence of the ministry, and therefore the peace of the country.

The House of Lords, on the 7th of May, resolved itself into a committee of the whole House on the Reform Bill, and Lord Grey, after postponing as of course, the title and preamble of the bill, gave notice that he should propose the omission of the words 'fifty-six' in the first clause, because 'he understood that there were noble lords who, admitting the

principle of disfranchisement, were of opinion that the number of boroughs to be disfranchised should not be fixed until Schedule A had been considered.' To obviate such objections, it was his intention, when the committee came to that part of the clause in which the number fifty-six was mentioned, to propose the omission of those words, and then the clause would stand thus:—

'That each of the boroughs enumerated in the Schedule A should cease to return any member or members to serve in parliament.'

Lord Lyndhurst, however, so soon as the two motions of course were put and adopted, rose to anticipate the noble Earl, and proposed at once to defer the consideration of the two first and the most important clauses of the bill. The real intention of the learned lord was to defeat the disfranchising provisions of the bill—he sought to preserve the boroughs mentioned in Schedules A and B, and hoped to do so by first engaging the House in a debate on the enfranchising clauses, thereby occupying public attention, exciting their hopes, and dividing the party of reformers by proposing to confer the right of voting upon persons not at present possessed of it. 'Begin,' he said, 'by enfranchising, begin by conferring rights and privileges, by granting boons and favours. The noble Earl, however, proposes to begin by disfranchising, to begin by depriving a portion of the community of the rights and privileges which they at present enjoy;' and Lord Lyndhurst fancied that by this shallow

artifice he could induce the people to sanction his own proposed plan of proceeding, and to forego that for which they had been labouring during the past twelve months. Lord Grey at once resisted this proposal, explained the insidious nature of the proposition, and stated that, if it were adopted, he must seriously consider whether he could remain in his present position. The peers who had changed sides on the second reading, were glad of this opportunity of again uniting themselves to their old friends. Lord Wharncliffe, after expressing his determination to support Lord Lyndhurst's proposal, endeavoured to persuade the House and the country that, by so doing, he had no intention of postponing disfranchisement altogether, and rang the changes on the words enfranchisement and disfranchisement in the vain hope of throwing dust into the eyes of the reformers, in-doors and out. Lord Harewood also eagerly sought to rejoin the ranks of his former associates, and expressed his determination to support Lord Lyndhurst. Lord Grey and the Chancellor, however, stood firm, and refused to be cajoled into the tortuous course proposed.

'I hope,' said Lord Grey, 'noble lords will not deceive themselves. I am sincere in not attributing any sinister or indirect objects, or any insidious intentions, to the noble and learned lord who proposed, or to those noble lords who meant to support the propositions.' [A parliamentary disclaimer of this description is invariably followed by the very thing

disclaimed. Lord Grey, and the whole House knew that the proposal was insidious—that the real object of Lord Lyndhurst was utterly to defeat the bill, and that his proposal was eminently well fitted to attain his end.] 'My noble friend (Lord Wharncliffe) has said, that he did not intend to defeat the measure; but the tendency and effect of the motion, if ever a motion was calculated to have such an effect, would be to defeat the bill. I hope noble lords will not deceive themselves; but I must say, that if the motion be successful, it will be fatal to the whole bill. * * * I have no reason,' he added, 'to impute to others anything like faction; but if from any circumstances I should have been inclined to impute any such motives, the character and situation of the noble and learned lord who brought forward this motion would not allow me to do so; for I can never believe, that a person who holds the high situation of one of the judges of the land, could ever make himself the low instrument of party; and I therefore give the noble and learned lord credit for his disclaimer. Should the amendment be carried,' added Lord Grey, in conclusion, 'it will be necessary for me to consider what course I shall take. More I will not say than what on a former occasion was stated by the noble Earl on the other side, and it was not denied by any other person—that this bill has found support in public opinion. Noble lords deceive themselves, if they suppose that opinion in favour of the bill is relaxed; and certainly I dread the effect of

the House of Lords opposing itself as an insurmountable barrier to what the people think necessary for the good government of the country.'[1] The warning of the noble Earl was on this occasion disregarded. The House being in committee, proxies could not be counted, and the amendment of Lord Lyndhurst was carried, after an angry debate, by a majority of 35.

Contents	151
Non-contents	116
Majority . . .	35

Lord Grey at once proposed that the chairman should report progress, and ask leave to sit again on Thursday next (the 10th). Lord Ellenborough hereupon endeavoured to persuade the noble premier that the vote just come to by the House ought not to induce him to postpone the further consideration of the measure, and evidently fancying that the game was now in the hands of his own party, he proceeded to give a description of the measure which he was prepared to propose as a substitute for the ministerial bill, and which he believed would be adopted by the administration, and be satisfactory to the country.[2] Lord

[1] Hansard, 3rd Series, vol. xii. p. 718.

[2] This proceeding on the part of Lord Ellenborough was a false move in the game of party politics, as it proved the opposition to the bill insincere, showing it to be a mere party attempt to regain office. This I have often heard spoken of as Lord Ellenborough's '*incredible*' proposal. The Whigs never allowed their opponents to retrieve this one error.

Grey, however, turned a deaf ear to all these suggestions, and wisely refused to proceed with the discussion. The House adjourned—anxiety and even alarm were to be seen on the countenances of most of those who were present on that occasion, whether peers or commoners. What the morrow might bring no one knew, but even the most reckless thought with something like dread of the burst of popular indignation that was sure to follow the success of this party manœuvre.

And, assuredly, whatever anticipations of anger and excitement on the part of the nation might then have been entertained, were more than fulfilled, so soon as the country became acquainted with the vote of the House of Lords, and the consequences to which it necessarily led. Lord Grey and his colleagues now saw that the bill could not be carried while the House of Peers was in its present frame of mind. They had therefore but two courses before them, either at once to resign, or to advise the king to exercise his prerogative of creating peers to such an extent as to give the ministers a working majority in favour of their proposed measure of reform, and if this advice were not adopted, then to tender their resignation. The cabinet adopted the latter alternative. The king instantly refused to adopt the plan suggested, and accepted the resignation which the administration thereupon tendered to him.[1]

[1] The difficulty to be encountered in the Lords had long been foreseen; and the proposal to make a number of new peers for

the purpose of obtaining a majority in favour of the bill, had been long since made in the cabinet, as has been already stated. That the king had been sounded, and would be asked to consent to the proposal, was known to Lords Wharncliffe and Harrowby, and their votes upon the second reading were generally believed at the time to have been given, under the duress of the probable consent of the king. When, however, the crisis came, upon the defeat of the ministers in committee, and the king was advised by them to act upon his former consent, the king refused, asserting as his justification for departing from the promise he was supposed to have given, that it was given with reference to passing the whole bill, and not any separate clauses of the bill in committee. The public believed that this change in the royal determination was the result of intrigues in which his own family took an active part, and the queen was generally accused of being among the most persevering of those who advised the king to refuse the advice of Lord Grey, and accept his resignation. (See the *Times*, May 11, 1832.) And Lord Munster considered himself to be so plainly pointed at by the public rumours, that he thought fit to defend himself in the Lords, and to deny the charge. This account, if true, of the change in the king's mind, will explain away the charge brought against the ministry at the time of having falsely stated that they had the power of making peers. They certainly did let it be understood that the king had consented to create peers if the necessity should arise (though they never themselves perhaps directly stated it); and yet when the time came, they were unable to carry into effect the threat upon which their friends confidently relied. The general belief that the king had by intrigue been induced to change his mind, and break his promise, made not only the queen, but also the king's children, most unpopular. Had the popular feeling been less pronounced, a compromise would have been attempted, and Lords Wharncliffe, Harrowby, and Haddington would probably have been called upon to form an administration upon that basis.

CHAPTER IV.

FROM THE RESIGNATION OF THE WHIG ADMINISTRATION (MAY 9TH, 1832), TO THE PASSING OF THE ENGLISH REFORM BILL.

ON Wednesday, the 9th of May, the resignation of the ministers, and the king's acceptance of it, were formally announced by Lord Grey in the House of Lords, and by Lord Althorp in the House of Commons. The effect produced upon the country generally, and upon the various classes of politicians both in parliament and out of it, was almost unprecedented in the annals of this country.

The king was evidently not averse to the departure of his Whig advisers, and willingly accepted their tendered resignations, in the hope and with the full belief of now being able to obtain another cabinet from amongst the opponents of the Reform Bill, who would be prepared to propose and able to carry such a measure as would satisfy the country, and keep the pledge which the king had given to the nation, without producing any real change in the representation of the people. He therefore, so soon as he had received the resignation of Lord Grey, sent for Lord Lyndhurst, to whom he was stated to have applied

because that learned lord had been his Chancellor, and was now, being Chief Baron, removed from 'the vortex of politics.'[1] The king said that the resignation of Lord Grey had left him in a position for which he was wholly unprepared, and that he had sent for Lord Lyndhurst in order to consult with him as to the course to be pursued in the difficult circumstances in which he was placed, and he desired Lord Lyndhurst to collect all the information possible on the subject, and to communicate to him the state of the country and of parties, with the view of affording materials to guide him in his future conduct. Such is Lord Lyndhurst's own account of this memorable interview.

In obedience to these commands, Lord Lyndhurst immediately proceeded first to the Duke of Wellington, next to Sir Robert Peel, and to them both stated the views and wishes of the king. 'His Majesty,' said

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[1] The Duke of Wellington described Lord Lyndhurst's position thus:—'His Majesty felt it necessary to send for my noble and learned friend, who was out of the immediate line of politics.'—*Mirror of Parliament*, 1832, vol. iii. p. 2042.

Sir Robert Peel, when giving his version of these events, on the 18th of May, gave at the same time Lord Lyndhurst's description of his own position, in these words: 'On Wednesday last, Lord Lyndhurst waited on me, stating, not that he had authority from his Majesty to form an administration, but that, having been his Majesty's Lord Chancellor—now holding a high judicial situation, *and being on that account out of the immediate vortex of politics*, he had been selected for these reasons by his Majesty, for the purpose of conferring with him on the present state of affairs.'—*Mirror of Parliament*, ibid. p. 2073. A curious description of the very person who had led the opposition in their successful attack on the ministerial measure!

the Duke of Wellington, when giving his account of these transactions, 'insisted that some extensive measure of reform (I use his Majesty's own words) should be carried.' And the Duke of Wellington, though strongly of opinion that the proposed measure of reform was unnecessary, and likely to prove most injurious, immediately consented to assist the king in forming an administration upon the condition his Majesty mentioned.[1] 'My advice to the king was,' said the Duke, 'not to re-appoint his late ministry, nor was it to appoint myself. I did not look to any objects of ambition. I advised him to seek the assistance of other persons well qualified to fill the high situations of the state, expressing myself willing to give his Majesty every assistance, whether in office or out, to enable him to resist the advice which had been given him.' Sir Robert Peel, however, to whom, in fact, the part of prime minister was offered, at once and peremptorily refused the dangerous honour, declaring 'that no authority nor example of any man or any number of men could shake his determination not to accept office, under existing circumstances, upon such conditions.'[2] The conduct of both the Duke of Wellington and Sir Robert Peel was, upon this remarkable occasion, eminently characteristic. The devotion of the Duke to what he

[1] Hansard, 3rd Series, vol. xii. p. 997. *Mirror of Parliament*, 1832, p. 2042, *et seq.*

[2] Hansard, 3rd Series, vol. xii. p. 1074. *Mirror of Parliament*, 1832, p. 2074.

believed his duty to his sovereign and his country, and the prudence and cautious sagacity of Sir Robert Peel, were alike conspicuous at this most trying and difficult conjuncture. The Duke showed that he was ready to brave all the obloquy and to meet all the imputations of inconsistency to which he well knew that he would be subjected by now consenting to assist the king in carrying a measure of reform, after his vehement opposition to the ministerial plan, and solemn protest against it when sanctioned by a vote of the House of Lords upon the second reading of the bill. Sir Robert Peel, on the contrary, felt, if he were now to carry a measure to which he had on principle given a most determined opposition, and which he had declared to be dangerous to the existence of our monarchical institutions and to the peace of the country, that he might indeed obtain power for the moment, but that he would ruin himself in the estimation of the judicious, honest, and instructed portion of his countrymen. He saw clearly, from the excitement which the retirement of Lord Grey created, that the Reform Bill must be carried; and he was induced, for many reasons, to desire that it should become law under the auspices of its authors and original proposers.[1]

From the 9th to the 17th of May, the nation was

[1] The reasons given by Sir Robert Peel upon this occasion, when weighed with reference to his subsequent career, are of extraordinary value, as evidence of the peculiar moral and mental character of the man.

left in suspense as to the result of the ministerial negotiations, and a series of intrigues then began, nearly unexampled in the annals of political profligacy. The object sought was, as usual, office; and for that end a host of politicians of all parties proved themselves ready to desert every principle by which their whole political career had been hitherto regulated. So soon as Sir Robert Peel declared that he would not assist in carrying a reform measure, the Duke of Wellington endeavoured to frame a cabinet which, without the right honourable gentleman's assistance, might be able to conduct the affairs of the government, and yet satisfy the popular wish by carrying some pretended measure of parliamentary reform. The Speaker, Mr. Manners Sutton, was to lead the House of Commons, the Duke himself being prime minister. Still, however, the difficulty was not conquered. Who would support such an administration was a grave question not yet decided. Would the old Tory party forget the catholic emancipation, and now assist the minister who on that occasion so signally deceived their anticipations? Would any portion of the so-called liberal party desert the bill and the Whigs, join the Duke, and with his personal friends, together with that section of the great Tory party who still supported him after 1829, and who left office when he himself was compelled to resign, combine now to form a ministry of compromise? To dissolve the House of Commons was a hopeless and most dangerous expedient; and what the present House

would actually do, everybody saw depended upon the conduct of the people out of doors—what that conduct would be did not long remain doubtful. No sooner was it known that Lord Grey had resigned, and that the Duke of Wellington was endeavouring to frame a really anti-reform administration, than a fierce and vehement spirit was evinced by all classes of people, both of opposition to the Duke of Wellington and of violent resentment against all who were supposed to favour the anti-reform party. The language of the late administration and their immediate friends had hitherto been of a nature to induce the public to believe, not merely that the king himself, but that the queen and his family generally were favourable to the ministerial measure. The epithet of 'patriot king' had been lavishly employed by all such persons when speaking and writing about his Majesty, and every possible expression of attachment and respect was profusely employed whenever the queen's name was mentioned. When, however, the news was received that the reform ministry was at an end, suspicion instantly arose respecting the sincerity of the king; and the distrust long really entertained with regard to the queen, and only by policy suppressed, at once found a voice. Expressions of bitter hate and contumely were freely employed by newspapers and popular speakers throughout the country when speaking of the king and his family.[1] This want of respect

[1] The popular feeling was illustrated after a ludicrous fashion by Mr. Orator Hunt in the House of Commons, on the 21st of

was not evinced merely by journals addressed to the rude and uneducated portions of the people, but by the most widely circulated and most influential papers in the kingdom, proving that the spirit to which an expression was thus given pervaded all ranks, and would impart energy and strength to their determinations and acts in the struggle that appeared imminent between the House of Peers on the one hand, and the immense majority of the people on the other. The ministry and their friends had long been aware of the danger that attended their measure upon its reaching the House of Lords; they therefore, by means of the press and by public meetings throughout

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May. This person, who had been once a popular leader, utterly lost his power by opposing the reform administration when member for Preston; he nevertheless professed to be an exponent of popular feeling, and thus described the change of that feeling respecting the queen: 'Only a week back, and omnibuses and coaches and all were christened Adelaide. Half the boys and girls too who were born were christened Adelaide; and now the name was all at once wiped out from the omnibuses, and the boys and girls were ashamed of it.'—Hansard, vol. xii. p. 1173.

The following newspaper description proves how suddenly and how completely the feelings of the people had changed with respect both to the king and the queen:—

'It being known that the king would come to town to-day, the greatest popular feeling was excited, and the line of roads from Windsor to St. James's Palace was thronged with people ready to receive him.

'At a quarter-past twelve o'clock the royal carriage reached Hounslow, where a strong guard of about twenty men of the 9th Lancers joined the royal carriage, in which were the king and queen. The postilions passed on at a rapid rate; and, on entering the town of Brentford, the people, who had assembled in great numbers, began to groan, hiss, and make the most

the country, and by petitions to both Houses of parliament, had from the first endeavoured to make the peers understand and appreciate the risk that would be incurred by a rejection of the proposed Reform Bill. A very complete and active organization existed in London for the purpose of exciting the country and obtaining from the people vehement petitions in favour of the bill. The leading members of the administration, indeed, professed to deprecate the employment of threatening expressions, and to blame those who recommended violence for the purpose of intimidating and coercing the House of Lords, yet was it well known, or at least surmised, that so long as the bill

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tremendous noises that can be imagined. The escort kept behind, and close to the carriage windows, or in all probability mischief would have ensued, as we were told a number of clots of dirt were hurled at the carriage. Along the road to London the people expressed their feelings in a similar manner; and when the carriage entered the park, the mob saluted their Majesties with yells and execrations of every description, which we refrain from publishing. The moment the carriage entered the palace-yard the gates were closed.

'Shortly after the arrival of the king, the Duke of Wellington arrived at the palace, and, if possible, the people treated him worse than they did the king. The Duke remained in conference with his Majesty about twenty minutes, and then left the palace amid the most astounding yells of the populace.

'It is with feelings of deep and unfeigned regret we announce the above. A week since—only a short week since—the king was in full possession of the greatest popularity any earthly monarch could enjoy; and now, behold the change! By whom has it been effected? The new administration will not be announced to-day—it cannot before Monday. Will it ever be announced at all?'—*Sun*, May 12th.

was really in danger, violent petitions would be received with great favour by the administration, and that violent language was grateful to the ears of those in power. When at length the House of Lords, disregarding these threatening indications of popular feeling, brought matters to a crisis, and forced the ministers to resign, the long-cherished and only half-suppressed popular anger and suspicion were allowed to burst forth in the most vehement demonstrations and threats. From one end of the country to the other petitions were sent to the House of Commons, praying that House to stop all supplies until the Reform Bill should be passed. The political unions everywhere began to organize their members for actual insurrection. Meetings in London were held by day and by night, at which the most violent language was employed, not by unknown or inferior persons, but by men of rank and substance.[1] Not only was parliament entreated to withhold supplies, but individuals were advised to refuse the payment of taxes; associations were proposed of persons who would undertake to use no excisable articles, and a run upon the Bank

[1] Lord Milton, now Lord Fitzwilliam, openly advised the people to refuse the payment of taxes. Mr. Duncombe, member for Hertford, joined the Political Union of London, and took part in their discussions. 'When the tax-gatherer called on Lord Milton last week, he requested that the tax-gatherer would call again, because he was not certain that circumstances might not arise which would oblige him to resist their payment. Does the noble lord admit the truth of this statement? LORD MILTON: Yes, certainly.'—*Mirror of Parliament*, 1832, June 5, p. 2456.

of England was recommended, by immense placards posted upon every bare wall throughout London, and which couched its dangerous recommendation in these ominous words—'GO FOR GOLD, AND STOP THE DUKE.'

The anger and indignation felt and thus fiercely evinced were not confined to one class of persons, or any peculiar sect or condition. Rich and poor, noble and commoner, churchman and dissenter, grave citizens, members of both Houses of parliament, the Common Council of London, parish vestries, and immense public meetings, all employed language indicative of a serious and resolute determination to resist with arms, if necessary, the attempt of the House of Lords to reject the bill, spite of the ardent expectations of the people. The Common Council met, in accordance with a requisition to the Lord Mayor to convene a meeting, for the purpose of taking into consideration the measures necessary to be adopted in consequence of the proceedings in the House of Lords. Resolutions condemning the conduct of the House of Peers, and asserting that they who had advised the king not to create peers were enemies of their sovereign, had put to imminent hazard the stability of the throne and security of the country, were passed by acclamation; and the following yet more significant resolution received an immediate and clamorous assent.

'That, under these circumstances, this court feels it to be its duty, as a necessary means of procuring for the people of this great country an efficient reform, to petition the House of Commons to withhold the supplies until such a reform shall have been secured.'

A standing committee was also appointed of all the aldermen, and certain of the citizens, for the purpose in the present crisis, 'so pregnant with danger,' of meeting from day to day to watch events, and take steps to insure the passing of the Reform Bill. These most unusual proceedings, and the extraordinary language employed by the different speakers in the Common Council and elsewhere, and vehemently cheered by the vast meetings which met upon those occasions, proved beyond the possibility of doubt that the whole mercantile and trading classes in the metropolis were prepared to adopt revolutionary measures, if such were necessary, for the attainment of the Reform Bill.[1] Immense numbers of persons, who hitherto had considered the proceedings of the National Political Union in London too violent, were now, says the *Times* of the 11th May, 'at their own solicitation admitted members.' The various parishes called upon their local officers to convene public meetings; and in every meeting the proposal to refuse the payment of taxes was alluded to, and received with enthusiastic approbation. Petitions to the House of Commons, entreating that House to withhold the supplies until reform was attained, were almost universally proposed, and when proposed were invariably adopted.

The excitement in the provinces was, if possible,

[1] The king was always anxious about and eager to know the feelings of the merchants and traders in the City; and doubtless the ministers, who well knew this feeling, made the most of these demonstrations, perhaps in no slight degree contributed to make the demonstrations themselves.

even more threatening than in London. Birmingham was at that time looked upon as the head-quarters of reform; and the movements of its Political Union, presided over by Mr. Thomas Attwood, were deemed of great importance both by the friends and the opponents of reform. The news that the Reform Bill was in fact defeated, and that Lord Grey had resigned, instantly excited not only the more ardent reformers of the town, who had hitherto constituted the Union, but stirred up the whole population, timid and fearless, eager and apathetic alike; and they in various ways made manifest their anger and their determination. Placards were exhibited in the windows, some of which were in these words:—

NOTICE.
No Taxes paid here
until
The Reform Bill is passed.

Others stated, 'No taxes paid here in money, and no goods bought, distrained for taxes.' And, as was the case in London, immense numbers of persons to whom political agitation was disagreeable, and who therefore had hitherto abstained from taking part in it, now joined the Political Union.[1] Catholic priests

[1] A declaration to the following effect was signed in a few hours by five hundred persons—among the most respectable of the inhabitants:—

'We, the undersigned inhabitants of the town and neighbourhood of Birmingham, who have hitherto refrained from joining the Birmingham Political Union, deem it our duty to our country, at this awful crisis, to come forward and join that body, for the

and grave quakers ostentatiously enrolled their names in the books of the Union, stating that they did so, in order to preserve the peace, for anarchy and confusion, they asserted, were certain, unless the Reform Bill were instantly carried. Deputies from the surrounding towns came hurriedly to Birmingham, as a centre, in order to concert measures 'in this dangerous crisis.' A meeting was held, a petition was proposed and adopted, and a deputation immediately selected to carry the petition express to London. The petition, among other angry and violent expressions, contained this very plain and threatening announcement, which when it was read to the excited crowd, whose petition it purported to be, was received, says the newspaper of the day, with a tremendous burst of cheering which lasted several minutes. 'That your petitioners find it declared in the bill of rights, that the people of England may have arms for their defence, suitable to their condition, and as allowed by law; and your petitioners apprehend that this great right will be put in force generally, and that the whole of the people of England will think it necessary to have arms for their defence, in order that they may be prepared for any circumstances that may arise.[1]

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purpose of promoting the further union, order and determination of all classes in support of the common cause of parliamentary reform.'

[1] Similar proceedings occurred in Manchester, and a deputation was sent to London with their petition. 'The Manchester petition was the very first which was presented praying the

A petition which more plainly stated the intentions of its framers actually to have recourse to arms, was probably never presented to the House of Commons.

The delegates from Birmingham, who brought this petition express to London, were next day present at various public meetings held in the metropolis. Their presence excited still more the enthusiasm of the people, who now seemed to vie with each other in the employment of fierce and threatening language, and in proposing means by which the House of Lords might be coerced into a sense of the danger which clearly impended over the very order to which they belonged.

Among the more remarkable of the public meetings held in the metropolis was that of Southwark, which attracted especial attention, because of the attendance of the member for Southwark, Mr. W. Brougham, who evidently intended that the world should believe that he spoke on behalf, and in the name of his brother, the Lord Chancellor. The language he employed, indeed, proved the jealous nature of the times, being as it was, anxiously directed to answering imputations upon the fidelity of the Chancellor to his party and the cause of reform. This vindication would not have been attempted, had not the imputation obtained some credence. 'A report has been very

House of Commons *to stop the supplies until reform and a redress of grievances were obtained.*'—See *Personal Recollections of Manchester*, by A. Prentice, in which an amusing account is given of the journey to London by the deputation charged with the petition, p. 409, *et seq.*

prevalent,' said the learned gentleman, 'that the Lord Chancellor is to continue in office, and form part of a government, but not Earl Grey's government. This report I have authority to contradict. My brother will ever continue to support the cause of the people by every means within his power; and with no other cause will he identify himself. Something has been said,' he added, 'about the people not paying taxes, and a resolution to that effect would be highly illegal. People might individually refuse, without rendering themselves amenable to the law. Now this is an affair easily arranged. If a tax-gatherer calls upon me, and asks me to settle his little bill for taxes, I may say to him in reply—I have got a little bill of my own, Sir, which I should like to have settled by the gentlemen down in Westminster, who owe it me, and unless that little bill of mine be satisfactorily settled, you must never expect me to settle yours.' Again, reverting to his brother, he said, 'Before I conclude, I beg to state to this meeting, that my brother, the Lord Chancellor, is at this moment in better health than ever—he is in good fighting order, as the sham reformers will discover to their cost.' (This announcement was received, says the report, with thunders of applause.) 'He will prove a sharp thorn in their sides—he will never desert the cause of the people.'

This anxious assertion of continued fidelity shows that the suspicion which was sought to be allayed was strong and extensive, if not general.

In this remarkable and dangerous state of affairs, the attention of the whole country was naturally turned to the House of Commons, which, fortunately for the peace of the country, did not oppose or run counter to the public opinion—neither did it give itself wholly up to its guidance—but by preserving a happy medium, distant equally from subserviency to the will of the peers, and abject obedience to the dictates of popular indignation, kept alive the enthusiasm of the friends of reform, without recommending them to transgress the law. The House placing itself at the head of the people, incited, checked, controlled, and directed the popular movement.

The motion of Lord Lyndhurst was made and carried on Monday, the 7th of May. The result was known on the Tuesday in the metropolis; and the House of Commons met on that day, every one knowing, indeed, what was impending, but no one being willing to incur the responsibility of alluding to the existing critical state of affairs, lest he might be accused of causing or hastening the catastrophe which all felt was inevitable. On Wednesday, however, Lord Althorp having formally announced that the resignation of the ministers had been tendered and accepted, hesitation was no longer possible; and Lord Ebrington rose, so soon as Lord Althorp sat down, and gave notice that he would, on the morrow, move, first, a call of the House, and then an address to his Majesty, on the present state of public affairs. A little scene of somewhat theatric artifice was there-

upon enacted. Lord Althorp, after the fashion of Antony, begged his friends not to be guilty of any sudden act of mutiny. 'I would submit,' he said, 'that in the present state of affairs, and in the present crisis, any course that might throw embarrassment in the way of the formation of a new administration ought not to be taken, and I therefore wish that my noble friend would for a short time postpone his motion.'[1] Hereupon his friends, and the friends of reform, raised a shout of opposition, and entreated Lord Ebrington to persist in his determination to move an address to the Crown on the next day. In the midst of the excitement thus raised, Mr. Baring thrust himself into the crowd of eager, angry, and disputing members, and in no slight degree contributed to increase the turmoil, by suggesting that Lord Althorp should, before the discussion upon Lord Ebrington's motion, explain the circumstances which had led to the resignation of ministers. This suggestion on the part of Mr. Baring was prompted evidently by a strange misconception of the feeling of the people out of doors. He himself perfectly well knew what the circumstances were which had brought about the resignation of Lord Grey. He knew that Lord Grey had advised the king to create a number of peers sufficient to pass the Reform Bill—that the king had refused to act upon this advice, and that thereupon Lord Grey had resigned. But Mr. Baring did not

[1] Hansard, vol. xii. p. 772.

know the feeling that would be manifested by the people on this matter. He believed that a large and most influential portion of the reformers would be shocked by the advice thus given—that they would applaud the resistance of the king, and sympathise with the House of Peers, which was thus to be 'swamped' by this extraordinary creation. 'It was important,' he said, 'that the House at large should be acquainted with the particulars—that it should know whether the advice tendered to the king was not what he could not hesitate to call the most outrageous and unconstitutional which it was possible for ministers to give. If so, he would then only say, that he very much mistook the feelings of the people of England, if a very large majority of them would not be imbued with a strong feeling of gratitude towards his Majesty for so promptly accepting the resignation of those who tendered such advice.' Sir Robert Peel entertaining the same opinion with respect to the popular feeling, supported Mr. Baring in demanding a full explanation of the causes which had led to the resignation of ministers. The public out of doors quickly made it apparent, however, that in their opinion 'swamping' the House of Lords was a thing they would willingly see done twenty times over, were such a process necessary to the attainment of their favourite measure of reform. Since the days of the Long Parliament, the House of Lords has never been in so much jeopardy as it was during the few days that passed between the resignation of Lord

Grey, and his reinstatement in office with power to carry the Reform Bill.

In the debate which followed on the next day, upon the motion of Lord Ebrington, the opponents of the late ministers endeavoured to show that they had resigned upon a question of mere idle form, and insisted that Lord Lyndhurst and his friends in the Lords really intended to pass the bill without any material alterations. Such an assertion did no good—for no one believed it. The postponement of the two Schedules A and B was felt by all to be merely preliminary to the entire mutilation of the whole measure —which proceeding everybody perceived to have been frustrated by the decided and prompt conduct of Lord Grey, and fully agreed with him when he said, 'It is impossible for me to proceed with the measure subject to the daily alterations which might be forced upon me by a majority, four-fifths of which consist of persons who object to all reform whatever."[1] The people therefore scouted the statement that no real injury to the bill was intended. They looked upon it as a palpably false pretence, and turned a deaf ear to all the argumentation which followed a declaration so impolitic, because so evidently untrue. Every attempt to excite sympathy for the House of Lords and the king, as the parties attempted to be 'bullied' on this occasion, utterly failed; and before the debate upon Lord Ebrington's motion came to a conclusion, the

[1] Hansard, 3rd Series, vol. xii. p. 766.

most obstinate members of the opposition were convinced that some measure of reform, and that a large one, was at length absolutely inevitable.

The language, however, now employed by the opponents of the late ministers filled the friends of the reform administration with a new and well-grounded alarm. Having thrust the Whigs out of office, the next thing, on the part of the opposition, was to attain office for themselves, and to keep it. But to retain office and refuse all reform was at length seen to be impossible. The king, in the first place, now that, by the second reading of the bill, the Lords had sanctioned the principle of the measure, considered himself bound in honour to effect some change in the representative system; and the people, in the next place, showed that they did not intend to be trifled with, and that some, and that a very large, extension of the constituency returning the House of Commons they were resolved to obtain. The ready acquiescence of the Duke of Wellington, when the king proposed office to him on the condition of bringing in and carrying a measure of reform, proved at once that in the Duke at least the expectants would encounter no serious obstacle: nobody believed that the scruples of Lord Lyndhurst would prevent either himself or his friends accepting place upon the required conditions; and looking back upon the past life of Sir Robert Peel, most persons believed that his solemn and oft-reiterated objections on principle to any reform in parliament, did not preclude the possibility or even

probability of a sudden and complete change—if not in his opinions, at least in his policy with regard to our system of popular representation. The conduct, too, lately pursued by certain portions of the opposition, led the friends of the Whig administration to believe that this plan for ousting the ministers, and then bringing in and carrying a measure similar to theirs, had long been devised, and for some time past pursued. The various negotiations with Lord Wharncliffe and his friends, the proceedings of the Duke of Buckingham—his letter to the king, his proposals to the Lord Chancellor, his plan of reform formally announced in the House of Lords before the debate on the second reading of the ministerial bill, and Lord Ellenborough's eager proposal after the ministerial defeat, were all, it was supposed, parts of the same scheme. This scheme was supposed to have been devised upon the expectation that there would be division in the cabinet, and they who were the leaders of the present opposition, in fact attempted, upon various occasions, to sound some of those whom they hoped and believed would join the new administration when it should appear that a measure of reform would be immediately proposed under their auspices. A report was also now current that the king had himself, when the ministerial resignations were tendered, endeavoured to induce first the Duke of Richmond to leave his friends and become a member of the cabinet about to be formed, and next, that he had very earnestly pressed the Lord Chancellor to

retain his high office, and become the Lord Chancellor of that party which had just ousted Lord Grey.[1]

Although it was said that the king had failed in both these instances, the friends of the late administration were not by any means assured that a plan of the description suggested might not be successful, and in the debate on Lord Ebrington's motion a battery was at once opened and directed against those who might be induced to advocate any measure of reform after having excluded the reform administration. Mr. Macaulay dwelt with emphasis upon the improbability and dishonesty of such conduct, assuming, with rhetorical dexterity, that the sincere opponents of reform 'were too honest, and had too strong a sense of shame now to support a new Reform Bill. The inconsistency of the act would be too glaring —the time was too short—the memory of their former professions was too recent—the motive would be too obvious. * * * Why, the ink was scarcely yet dry of the protests which noble lords had entered against the Reform Bill. Their speeches were yet ringing in the people's ears, in which they denounced the measure, and would they attempt to take office? In attempting to administer the government they were so eager to grasp, they must either shamefully desert the whole of their former protestations, or go in direct

[1] The *Times* openly asserted, that such attempts had been made by the king, and challenged denial, May 12th, 1832; and that such an offer was made to the Lord Chancellor, and immediately declined, I have every reason to believe.

opposition to the wishes of a majority of this House. And even if they could succeed in overcoming the majority of this House, they would still have dangers before them from which Mr. Pitt would have shrunk, and even an Earl of Strafford have hesitated to encounter. They would go forth to the contest with public opinion without arms either offensive or defensive. If they had recourse to force, they would find it vain; if they attempted gagging bills, they would be divided; in short, they would, in taking office, present a most miserable exhibition of impotent ambition, and appear as if they wished to show to the world a melancholy example of little men bringing a great empire to destruction.'[1] The alarm thus plainly evinced was not confined to the immediate friends of the Whig administration, but was exhibited also by the various newspapers which supported them; and by none more violently than the *Times*, which was at that period supposed to speak the sentiments of some of the most important members of the Whig cabinet. The decorum and restraint imposed by parliamentary forms were without influence upon those who gave vent to their feelings in the columns of a newspaper; and we may therefore learn more accurately what those feelings were if we take the evidence afforded by this uncontrolled writing in preference to the necessarily

[1] Hansard, 3rd Series, vol. xii. pp. 856-7. The intensity of the excitement under the influence of which Mr. Macaulay thus spoke, may be understood, when we recollect that among these 'little men' the Duke of Wellington was numbered.

more guarded expressions of parliamentary speakers; and the extent and seriousness of the alarm which now disturbed the minds of the ejected ministers and their friends lest the Duke of Wellington should, after accepting office, bring in and carry a really effective measure of reform, may at once be ascertained by watching the conduct and listening to the language of the irresponsible friends of the late administration. During the whole period of suspense in which the public continued so long as the Duke of Wellington was endeavouring to organize a cabinet, every possible publicity was given to the many distinct, vehement, and constantly repeated declarations of the Duke himself and of those who were supposed likely now to join his cabinet, against reform in every shape, and to any extent. Extracts from their speeches and writings were industriously collected and printed in the newspapers, in placards, and in hand-bills; were quoted in speeches, and even sermons; in pamphlets, in songs, in books. Comments—angry, argumentative, ironical, grave, sarcastic, and admonitory, were appended to these declarations of opinion. And of the bitterness of the hate then raging in the minds of the ministerial party, and the extremity of their terror, the following passage from the *Times* of the 14th of May may be taken as a pregnant testimony. It also affords a fair sample of the sort of language then employed.

'But of the multifarious feelings produced by this temporary overthrow of a nation's confidence, there is none so active or so general as that of astonishment

at the individual who it is now notorious has tripped up the heels of Lord Grey. What! the Duke of Wellington!—the commander-in-chief of all the ultra anti-reformers in the kingdom, now offers himself as minister; nay, has for months past been making fierce love to the office, with a full and undisguised resolution to bring in with his own hands a 'strong and satisfactory' Reform Bill.'

'Why, it was but on the 17th of April that the same Duke signed a protest against the second reading of Lord Grey's Reform Bill, pledging himself against *the principle* of the measure, as taking away too much power from the Crown, and giving too much to the people. A 'strong and satisfactory' Reform Bill! —when the sole aim and meaning of his protest, as indeed of every speech that he has made upon the subject, was its being strong and satisfactory to the bulk of the nation. Will he then give us a bill far short of the present one? If so, does he flatter himself that the House of Commons will sanction, or that the people of England, stung with disappointment, disgust, and resentment, will endure it? If the Duke of Wellington does now as minister, and having forced himself into office, in quality of an anti-reformer, design to pilfer Lord Grey's property from him—to retain the government on the very principle which he made the ground of obstinate opposition to that nobleman, and to introduce a bill 'not less efficient,' and 'not less satisfactory' than that which the noble Duke and his friends have just thrown out—there

may be dexterity in such conduct—there may be generalship—there may be food for incontinent exultation and chuckling at Apsley-house; but it affords evidence likewise of more ignoble faction—of a lust for office more sordid and execrable—of a meanness of inconsistency more humiliating and more shameful, than we had even suspected the Duke of Wellington of being capable of affixing to his own political character. As for success in such a course of imposture, it is, let us once for all warn his Grace, hopeless.'

The division with which the debate upon Lord Ebrington's motion closed, was not entirely satisfactory to the public out of doors, or to the ministry, as the majority, which amounted only to eighty, showed that some members had already begun to waver, and that desertions had already commenced. The numbers were—

Ayes	288
Noes	208
Majority . . .	80

Upon the third reading of the Reform Bill, the Ayes amounted to 355, but by adding the absent who were favourable, the actual number of those who supported the measure upon the final trial of strength respecting it, was ascertained to be 391. A jealous and searching scrutiny of every vote was therefore instituted, and a most active committee, sitting in London, brought to bear upon every deserter and

waverer, all the various influences to which each was subject. It was found that four persons who formed part of the majority on the third reading had voted against Lord Ebrington's motion; that twelve, who had attended the debate, and might, if they had pleased, have voted, stayed away; and that seventy-eight were absent in the country. Now, although from policy these seventy-eight absentees were spoken of in public, as unwillingly absent, and a large number probably were really so, still there was an uncomfortable feeling in the chiefs of the ministerial party—and immense pains were taken, and a very complete system organized by them for the purpose of keeping every member, not only at his post, but steady to the cause of reform. The absence of any member, even for one night, brought upon him a remonstrance from his constituents, if he represented a constituency, or his patron, if he were member for a close borough belonging to a friend of the late ministers; and what appeared to be the spontaneous result of popular feeling, was, in fact, brought about by the incessant labours of a few industrious and shrewd partisans, forming a secret, but very active and efficient committee in London; and these men who directed the secret machinery knew, but too well, that if the Duke of Wellington could organize a cabinet, which would bring in a measure of reform, large, though falling far short of the Whig plan, he might be able to retain power, and exclude, perhaps, for another quarter of a century, the whole Whig party from office.

Each day a fresh rumour agitated the public mind, and different lists of the supposed new ministry were circulated. The real difficulties in the path of the Duke of Wellington (for he was throughout assumed to be not only the chief mover in the present proceedings, but also the future prime minister),[1] were very accurately guessed. Sir Robert Peel's hesitation was believed to be the chief obstacle to the immediate formation of the cabinet, but his positive refusal to assume that difficult post was not yet known; and as everybody belonging to the Tory party was thought eager for office, the public generally, as well as the chief liberals, believed that the Duke would be eventually successful in his endeavours; and driven almost to despair by this anticipation, the Whig leaders, with certain exceptions, and the Whig party generally, employed language, and adopted tactics which made the country believe that armed resistance might eventually be necessary. Lord Grey, the Lord Chancellor, together with the more prominent members of the Whig cabinet, were, indeed, and of necessity, carefully guarded and temperate in their declarations—and all the more wary and sagacious of the party could never have really intended to run the terrible risk of civil commotion—but that great pains were taken to make

[1] On May the 14th, the *Times*, after giving from the *Spectator* a list of the new ministry, and repeating rumours as to various arrangements, says: 'We give these, of course, as mere rumours, and we believe that nothing certain is known upon the subject, except *that the Duke of Wellington is prime minister.*'

the House of Lords believe civil war to be imminent—in fact, inevitable—if their opposition to the Reform Bill were continued, no one now can doubt; and it is equally certain that at one period, when there was a general belief entertained that the Duke of Wellington was upon the point of successfully organizing an anti-reform cabinet, not only was the question of insurrection gravely mooted, but steps were actually about to be taken for the purpose of organizing an armed resistance.[1] The violence of the language employed by persons intimately connected with the Whig chiefs—the furious proposals of the newspapers known to speak the sentiments and wishes of the cabinet, all conspired to make the country believe that, if an insurrection were to break out, it would be headed by the great Whig leaders, and sanctioned by the general acquiescence of the immense majority of the Whig party. The consequence was, that a very large proportion of the more ardent reformers throughout the country were prepared to resist;[2] and civil war was, in fact, thus rendered far more probable than was ever really intended by those who were using the

[1] At this period, the Birmingham deputation was in London, and were preparing to proceed immediately home in order to begin resistance, when the news of the Duke of Wellington's failure rendered this terrible proceeding unnecessary.

[2] That the chief members of the late administration ever intended to proceed to illegal extremities, no one can for a moment imagine; but that the conduct of their friends led the reforming world to think of and prepare for armed resistance, is beyond a doubt.

popular excitement as the means by which they were to be reinstated in office. The partisans of the late administration were now placed in a difficult dilemma. If the Duke of Wellington formed an administration pledged to resist all reform, it was probable that violent and most disastrous commotion would ensue. If, however, the Duke should consent to some large measure of reform, the people might accept his proffer, and the Whigs would be permanently excluded from power. If the Tory party were not thoroughly frightened, they would, it was supposed, adopt the first plan—but, if greatly terrified, the second. The partisans of the late administration determined, therefore, to play a game difficult and even dangerous. They resolved to use violent and even threatening language, and also to propose violent measures to the people generally, in order, in the first place, to convince the House of Lords that a reform in parliament, not less sweeping than that already proposed, was now absolutely inevitable; and then, in the second, by every species of argument, and every mode of disparaging attack, to make the Duke of Wellington, and more particularly Sir Robert Peel, feel that they would both be for ever disgraced in the opinion of all honest men, if they formed part of an administration by which such a measure of reform should be ultimately carried. To effect this last desired result, it was necessary simultaneously to attain two intermediate, yet very different objects;—not only were the people to be excited, so as to be ready to dare every

thing for reform, but they were also to be made so fiercely angry with the leaders of the Tory party, as to refuse even an ample reform at their hands.

When Lord Grey resigned, and it was known that the king had resolved to form another administration, the world generally supposed that the Reform Bill was given up by his Majesty. All the agitation, therefore, was at that period directed against the plan of framing an anti-reforming cabinet, and against those who were supposed to be actually employed in then constructing it. The secret, however, soon oozed out, that the king intended to fulfil his promise respecting reform, and that the Duke of Wellington had resolved to assist the king in his difficulty, and hereupon arose the fears of the late administration lest he should succeed, and thus shut them out of office for years to come. The next rumour was, that Sir Robert Peel had refused to join the Duke; but it was still asserted that negotiations continued; and at length, on Monday, the 14th, Lord Carnarvon, openly in the House of Lords moved that the order of the day for going into committee on the Reform Bill, which stood for that day, should be discharged, with the view of appointing the Thursday following, stating his reason for proposing this postponement in the following terms:—'My lords, I have been given to understand that a new administration is forming, but that the final arrangements are not yet completed.' The House of Lords immediately assented to the motion, upon hearing this authoritative statement. The

House of Commons, however, exhibited a very different scene; and, from what there occurred, it was soon apparent that the Duke of Wellington, in his attempt to accomplish the desires of the king, was doomed not only to encounter the decided refusal of Sir Robert Peel to afford him any aid, and to be met by the fierce opposition of the whole reforming party, but also to be checked and eventually thwarted by the defection of the ultra Tory section, represented upon this occasion, as upon so many others, by Sir Robert Inglis. The discrepancy between the language of those who were supposed to speak as representatives of the Duke of Wellington—the one in the House of Lords, the other in the House of Commons—excited astonishment at the time, and proved, in fact, that he was not prepared for the occurrences of that important evening in the House of Commons.[1]

Mr. Alexander Baring acted at this crisis as the

[1] Lord Carnarvon was indeed said, on this occasion, to have spoken without authority from the Duke, and to have been a self-elected representative when he moved to discharge the order of the day for going into committee on the Reform Bill, and proposed to appoint Thursday for that purpose. The Duke of Wellington afterwards asserted, that on Monday no ministry was formed—or near formation. Lord Lyndhurst stated, that his commission ended on Saturday. The truth seems to be, that certain eager and sanguine persons would not consider the game yet to be lost, and were anxious still to afford the Duke an opportunity of playing another move. The language of Sir Robert Peel, Sir Robert Inglis, and Mr. Baring, however, put an end to the Duke's endeavours.—See *Mirror of Parliament*, 1832, May 17, p. 2052. Mr. Baring more particularly was, in the slang phrase of the day, said to have 'upset the coach.'

representative of the Duke in that House, and upon this evening warmly and elaborately defended his conduct. Lord Ebrington and the friends generally of the late administration, fearing that the Duke's endeavours would prove successful, attacked, with almost savage vehemence, his inconsistency, and what they called his political immorality, in now adopting the reform measure after his late vehement and solemn declarations against it. Hereupon Mr. Baring described the condition of the king, when deserted by Lord Grey—and asked whether any man could, after the faith of the king had been pledged to his people, advise him to break that faith and give up the Reform Bill. 'The ministers retire—they refuse to perform their duties—and I admit that to recommend the king not to pass a Reform Bill would be advice of the most pernicious kind, and the individual who gave it would be justly exposed to the reprobation both of the House and of the country.' He then turned the argument against Lord Grey, and in support of the Duke of Wellington —by showing that the king must be advised by some one—that he (the king) was pledged to reform, and could not desert it—that Lord Grey, because he had met with a trifling check in the House of Lords, recommended a most monstrous proceeding to the king, to which the king most wisely refused his assent. 'The minister thereupon, in a fit, retires, and the king applies to the Duke, who magnanimously determines to give up his own wishes, in order to preserve the honour of the king, and secure

the good government of the country.' Language and arguments of this description gave the Whigs to understand that the new administration was fully prepared to propose and carry a measure of reform. At this moment, Mr. T. Duncombe announced to the House that Lord Carnarvon had just stated in the House of Lords that the new administration was formed, except in some minor particulars; and now followed a scene of exasperation, rage, and disappointment, on the part of the friends of the late ministry, that almost baffles description. Mr. Duncombe commenced with a furious diatribe against Lord Lyndhurst:—'Where he (the Duke of Wellington) has found ministers to fill his cabinet I know not; but we all know who was the noble and learned individual first employed to compound the administration, and we now find that this administration is about to adopt the very bill, which it denounced only a few hours ago as revolutionary. I must say that the formation of such an administration could not have fallen into hands more worthy of the task. I do not deny the noble lord's learning or talents, but his whole life has been one continued scene of political prostitution and apostasy." The angry orator next attacked the whole bench of bishops, quoting from their lately delivered speeches strong and solemn declarations of political faith by those right reverend persons, garnished as is their wont with sanctimonious appeals to the name and attributes of the Divinity. He asked, very naturally, whether the bishops were

prepared to change and support the new administration. 'Are they, of a sudden, to fling up their mitres, and halloo for the bill, the whole bill, and nothing but the bill?'[1]

Lord John Russell, also, in plain, outspoken phrase, denounced the attempt of the Duke, and the Duke himself. Having cited the Duke of Wellington's own words, to prove the great importance of preserving intact the character of public men, he asserted, without circumlocution, that the Duke's own character was for ever gone, if he now consented to bring in a measure opposed to all his past declarations of opinion:—'Such being the sentiments of the noble Duke,' he said, 'I cannot believe, even at this hour, that he will place himself in a position in which he will enable any man to say of him, 'You have belied your pledge and falsified your opinions, and no man hereafter, when you express an opinion, however solemnly you may declare it, even should you place it upon the records of parliament, will have any sort of confidence or security, that you may not sweep away all your pledges in a single day.'[2] Speaking of Sir Robert Peel, and placing his conduct in contrast with that of the Duke of Wellington, he made the praise he freely bestowed upon the honour and consistency of the right honourable gentleman a means of bitter insinuation against the Duke. 'From all I have seen of the right honourable gentleman,' said

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1832, vol. iii. p. 2016.

[2] *Times*, May 15th, 1832. Hansard, 3rd Series, vol. xii. p. 929.

the angry speaker, 'I readily gave credence to the statement that he would not take office in the present conjuncture,—and I was sure that he would not form part of a cabinet into which honour cannot enter;'[1] and he concluded his harangue by stating, that if the measure should be carried by those who had hitherto opposed it, he should indeed be glad that so beneficial a law should be enacted, but 'that he could give no support or confidence to those who, in carrying that measure, would stand in the face of the country publicly dishonoured.' Mr. Macaulay had already formally announced, that if the Reform Bill should be carried by the Duke of Wellington, he would instantly move a resolution declaring that the House had no confidence in his administration. 'If others,' said the brilliant declaimer, 'wish to have infamy and place, let the House of Commons, at least, have honour and reform.'[2] The whole ministerial phalanx followed their leader, thereby clearly indicating the nature and the extent of their fears. A feeble defence was now attempted on behalf of the Duke of Wellington and his change of policy by Sir Edward Sugden and Mr. Alexander Baring. The dull forensic style and minute points of the former were ill-suited

[1] Hansard, 3rd Series, vol. xii. p. 930.

[2] *Idem*, p. 923. The *Times* gives a different version of this taunt: 'For the present, therefore, said the hon. member, I am perfectly willing to allow other persons to have infamy and place (enthusiastic cheering, renewed again and again)—I am willing, I say, to let others have infamy and place—let *us* have honour and the Reform Bill.'

to the occasion, serving only to excite the contemptuous merriment of his opponents, and to task the patience and enhance the sufferings of his friends. The hesitating manner of Mr. Baring, and his habitually two-sided balanced argumentation, gave an appearance of insincerity to all he said, and offended equally both sides of the House;—he shook the faith and courage of his own party without convincing or silencing his angry opponents. In this stage of the debate, however, Sir Robert Inglis furnished at once unequivocal evidence of his own feelings and opinions, and pretty plainly showed what, in all probability, would be the conduct of the ultra-Tory party upon the occasion. 'If,' he said, 'the concession of the greater portion of the Reform Bill is to be the condition of acceptance of office, I cannot think that any man who has seriously opposed that bill can accept office with honour.'[1]—'I cannot but regard the measure (i.e. the Duke's acceptance of office for the purpose of carrying the bill) with the greatest pain, as one of the most fatal violations of public confidence which could be inflicted.'[2]

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[1] This is the report given by the *Times*—the reporter saying, however, that Sir Robert Inglis was heard very imperfectly. That the words were accurately given, there seems good reason for believing. During this same debate, and upon several subsequent occasions, reference was made to this declaration of opinion, and by the reformers always with applause. The report in Hansard seems softened down.

[2] Hansard, 3rd Series, vol. xii. p. 947. The *Times* newspaper, which zealously worked for the reinstatement of the Whig

Mr. Baring, who spoke throughout these proceedings as the friend of the Duke of Wellington, in the course of his mingled statements of defence and explanation, professed to give descriptions of imaginary conversations between the king and the Duke. The world believed that what he spoke of as imaginary incidents had really occurred, and that the honourable gentleman was in fact stating what the king had said, and repeating the explanation given by him of the circumstances which had induced him to refuse the advice and to accept the resignation of the late cabinet, and also what were his present wishes with respect to the formation of another administration. In the course of this curious narrative it became evident that the Duke had hitherto failed in his endeavours to fulfil the wishes of the king, and Mr. Baring seems to have at once concluded that the declaration of opinion by Sir Robert Inglis was fatal to the proposed plan of a new cabinet; he therefore put forth a feeler to ascertain whether the members of the late administration were willing to make any compromise with

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ministry, re-echoed this estimate of the Duke's conduct, in every contemptuous form which their mighty armoury of abuse supplied. 'The world is yet in ignorance,' said the leading article of the 15th of May, 'whether the Duke (of Wellington) has selected his official assistants from the Horse Guards, or from the political unions—whether he comes with a Gagging Bill, or a Bill of Reform.' And the reformers throughout the country, taking their cue from these declarations, gave the Duke to understand, that he would be equally unacceptable, whether he came conceding or resisting reform.

respect to the minor provisions of the bill. The following words were received as the signal of capitulation:—

'The difference between the king and his ministers I hold to be one not at all irreconcileable. In any great political difference it has always happened that some of the leading members of the landed interests, or other persons of influence, were in the habit of interfering to arrange it; and I would ask, if it should turn out that there is no unwillingness now to pass the bill with the whole of Schedule A, but with some relaxation as to other and minor parts of it, what is there to hinder Earl Grey from interfering and offering his advices and services to carry it?' (Cheers from the ministerial side). This proposal, which meant that Lord Grey's cabinet was to be deemed at an end, was just that which the party most dreaded and against which their most violent attacks were directed. The cheers of the Whig party gave Mr. Baring a significant warning, and he thereupon began to bid something more. 'If the noble Earl should now be assured that there is a certainty of passing the bill in its main parts, with some modification as to detail, why should not, I repeat it, the noble Earl and his colleagues go back and take their seats?' Mr. Baring, though he employed the words, 'I repeat it,' had not before made this plain proposal that the late government should return, and every one was yet in doubt as to the extent of those alterations in detail which might be required. But from what immediately

followed, it appeared that the king was prepared for unconditional surrender. After having disclaimed, on his own part, all intention of accepting office, Mr. Baring said, 'At the same time, in the present situation of the country, I would offer my advice. I would make any sacrifice to bring about the establishment of a fixed government. I am therefore most anxious that the present government should retain their places. (Cheers and some laughter.) I really do think that the resignation of the present ministers would be a great calamity to the country, for if the Reform Bill is to pass,—*and that it now must pass, no man can doubt*,—I do not think that any other men ought to wish to be in place, for the disappointment which I have no doubt will be felt in all parts of the country at the frustration of the hopes which have been entertained of its effects, will tend to unsettle any administration which may then be in office.'[1] A shrewd prophecy, which was destined to be speedily fulfilled.

The language of Mr. Baring, nevertheless, surprised every one who knew of Lord Carnarvon's statement, and proved, if he really at the moment spoke the opinions and represented the wishes of the Duke of Wellington, either that there was a party determined at all hazards to continue the attempt to frame a new administration, or that Mr. Baring had been able to communicate with the Duke of Wellington upon the

[1] *Times*, May 15th, 1832.

subject of Sir Robert Inglis's opposition, and in the Duke's name gave up the attempt so far as he was concerned. But the probability is, that Mr. Baring determined for himself, upon hearing and ascertaining the feelings of the various sections of the Tory-party as expressed in the debate of Monday, that there was no hope of resisting the bill or of carrying it by means of a Tory administration, and that the Duke of Wellington subsequently acquiesced in his opinion. On the 17th, the Duke of Wellington himself stated, in the Lords, his own views of this debate. 'But, my lords,' he said, 'when I found that, in consequence of the discussions on Monday in another place (which, by the way, proved so clearly that the sentiments of the leading men then were, that peers should not be created for such a purpose), when I found that from these discussions it was impossible to form a government from that House of such a nature as would secure the confidence of the country, I felt it my duty to inform his Majesty that I could not fulfil the commission with which he was pleased to honour me, and his Majesty informed me that he would renew his communications with his former ministry.'[1]

The debate, spite of these attempts on the part of Mr. Baring to allay the tempest, still for a while raged, and the chief fury was directed against Lord Lyndhurst, whose early supposed apostasy from liberal opinions and his present position of a judge taking an

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1832, May 17, p. 2044.

active part in politics, afforded a tempting theme to his angry opponents. Sir F. Burdett, upon the question that the petition of the City of London be brought up, endeavoured to re-open the whole debate by indulging in a violent attack on that noble lord by name. But the language employed by Mr. Baring at length produced its necessary effect. Every observant person saw that the king would be compelled to recal Lord Grey, and give him power to carry the bill. In eager expectation of what the morrow would bring forth, the House, wearied as well as excited, adjourned at an early hour of the evening. On the next day, the 15th, in both Houses a statement was made that a communication from the king had been received by Lord Grey, but whether Lord Grey and his friends were to be restored to office was still left in doubt, and both Houses adjourned in ignorance of what the actual effect of the present negotiations between the king and his late servants might be. In order to give full time for definitive arrangements, both Houses adjourned to the Thursday following.

The Thursday came, but brought no explanations in either House, from Lord Grey or Lord Althorp, as to the definitive arrangements expected; but the Duke of Wellington and Lord Lyndhurst entered fully into a statement of what they had done in the exciting interval which had occurred between Lord Grey's resignation and his recal. What they communicated, however, the world already knew. It was known that the king had sent for Lord Lyndhurst—

that he had applied to the Duke of Wellington—that the Duke had consented to make an attempt to aid the king to form a new administration—that Sir Robert Peel had refused to be a party to this proceeding, and that the Duke had failed—so much was already known, and the explanations gave no further information. The conditions attending Lord Grey's return were now the great object of curiosity and interest, which his guarded language served, indeed, greatly to excite, and not in the slightest degree to satisfy. 'My lords,' he said, when pressed by his now furious opponents to describe his own position—'my lords, I cannot forbear repeating what I have already stated, that unless I can be assured of the ability to carry this bill fully and efficiently through the House, I certainly shall not continue to belong to the administration.'[1]

The Lord Chancellor, without in the least enlightening the ignorance of the already alarmed and excited lords, did nevertheless contribute greatly to increase their terror and curiosity. 'I wish simply to state,' he said, 'what I am sure my noble friend must have had passing in his mind, namely, the absolute necessity in the present state of the country, if he continued to serve his Majesty, not only of being assured of the ability to carry this bill efficiently through this House, but also that he should be able to carry it through with every reasonable despatch, consistently with the due discussion of its various provisions.'

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, p. 2050.

To describe the turbulent scene that followed this announcement is almost impossible. Attempt after attempt was made to force Lord Grey into an explanation of the conditions upon which he had returned to office, but no such explanation was afforded, and the mystery served both to exasperate and terrify the peers.

On Friday, the 18th of May, after long speeches and explanations on the part of the Archbishop of York and the Duke of Rutland, Lord Harewood put a direct and formal question to Lord Grey. 'My sole object is,' he said, 'to obtain some information with regard to the result of the negotiations which it was said were yesterday going forward. When we separated yesterday, it was understood that some arrangement was then in progress, which had not at that time been brought to a conclusion. Now, what I wish to learn is, whether or not the noble Earl has any information to communicate to the House on that subject?' Lord Grey's answer was as distinct and significant, as the question was plain and straightforward. 'My lords, I have now the satisfaction to inform you, that these communications (i. e. those which, since the Duke of Wellington had given up the commission with which he was charged, passed between the king and Lord Grey) 'have been brought to this result; that in consequence of his Majesty's desire, most graciously expressed to me, and in consequence of my seeing now that grounds of confidence exist to enable me to redeem the pledges which I gave your

lordships and the country, of not continuing the administration unless I had a confident security of passing the Reform Bill on the table unimpaired in its principles, and in all its essential details—in consequence of finding myself well grounded in that confident expectation, and having received from the sovereign his most gracious commands expressed to that effect, his Majesty's present ministers continue in their places.'

A violent outbreak followed this announcement, and Lord Harewood declared, that as he now saw that he must choose between two evils—viz., the Reform Bill, or a creation of peers, he chose the first, because he considered the latter a greater calamity than the Reform Bill itself. 'I mean to withhold further opposition to the bill, for fear of the greater calamity I mentioned. I prefer to get up in this House, and state openly to your lordships what I intend to do, rather than state it anywhere else, or not to state it at all. Having said this—having pointed out the line which I intend to pursue, I beg to add, that I have only adopted that line by compulsion—by a compulsion operating so strongly upon me, that I look upon it that this is the last time that I shall have an opportunity of uttering one word in this House as an independent member of it. Bidding farewell, then, to the freedom of debate—I say, let those who brought this infliction upon us—and I speak this not in anger, but in sorrow—let those who brought this infliction on the country be responsible for their acts to the

nation when it shall have recovered its senses.' Lord Winchelsea, though he also considered that the independence of the House ceased on that evening, declared that he at least intended still to oppose the bill. 'But,' he exclaimed, 'I feel I am no longer a member of an independent body—I feel that when I leave the walls of this House, I shall be an object of scorn—that the finger of scorn will be pointed at me, as the member of a body which has lost its independence, as the member of a political body deprived of the power of legislation. * * * I repeat, that nothing can be more evident than that the independence of this House is now about to be destroyed, and that destruction may be effected in two ways, either by the withdrawing of noble lords, as the noble Earl behind me purposes to do by compulsion, or by the infusion of a great number of peers.' This last proceeding, he asserted, would make the House of Peers as close a borough as any of those decayed places about to be disfranchised. 'Thus you will make,' said the angry peer, so blinded, indeed, by passion as not to perceive the necessary application of his statement—'thus you will make this House a packed jury, to try questions of right and property deeply affecting the interests of the country.' To free the House of Commons from this degrading and mischievous condition was the very purpose of the Reform Bill; and it seems strange that Lord Winchelsea, while bewailing the evil in the case of the House of Lords, was entirely dead to the mischief which resulted to the country from the de-

pendent state of the Commons. After some further skirmishing on the subject of the many libels on the queen, with which the press was said to teem, the Duke of Newcastle, driven by rage to forget all considerations of prudence, declared that he would make a motion on the subject of this threatened creation of peers—the purport of which should be, to deny the king's right thus to enthral the peers. 'I fearlessly assert,' said the Duke, 'that the Crown does not possess the right to destroy the independence of this House by creating a vast body of peers, under such circumstances, and for such a purpose. If you,' he cried, appealing to the peers around him, 'will come forward as men and as Englishmen to do your duty, there need be no fear of the result. If we do our duty, we may depend upon it the country will stand by us.'

This was rather too direct and violent a proceeding for the wary Lord Wharncliffe, who immediately rose to disclaim the constitutional doctrines of the noble Duke. But not being one whit better pleased than he with the threatened state of affairs, he reiterated the formal question of Lord Harewood. 'Am I,' said he, 'to understand from him (Lord Grey) that we are to have an increase of this House, or that we are not? Are our deliberations on this subject to be carried on, under the threat, and under the immediate pressure of a creation of peers to carry this bill? Or upon what other ground does the noble Lord opposite found the expression he made use of—namely, the security—

A NOBLE LORD.—'The confident expectation.'

LORD WHARNCLIFFE.—'Ay, the confident expectation which he now has of carrying the Bill unmutilated and unimpaired?[1] Does he found that confident expectation upon the belief that a certain number of peers will absent themselves from the House, so as to enable him to carry the measure in any shape or form that he may think proper? Does the noble Lord found his expectation upon this, or does he intend to convert his expectation into certainty by the creation of a sufficient number of peers?'

Lord Radnor hereupon interfered, protesting that Lord Wharncliffe had no right to put such a question, and an unseemly wrangle immediately followed. At length Lord Grey flatly refused to give any answer to such interrogatories. He said—

'I certainly do not feel myself called upon to answer the question which the noble Baron has put to me. I have stated to this House that I continue in office under the confident expectation that this bill will proceed successfully through all its future stages; upon what that expectation is founded I do not think it necessary to explain, neither do I think that the noble Lord has a right to call upon me to explain it.'[2] Lord Carnarvon then attempted to wring an answer from Lord Grey, by violent and threatening language —but the noble premier, regardless alike of the

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, p. 2069.
[2] *Idem.* p. 2069.

menace of one opponent, and the artifice of the other, left both unanswered.

Lord Wharncliffe well knew, and his very question proves that he well knew the grounds of Lord Grey's expectation. He was confident also, that Lord Grey would refuse formally to explain on what his expectation was founded—but hoping that obstruction might —that annoyance certainly would follow this importunate questioning, Lord Wharncliffe persisted in his interrogatories without even wishing for an answer. At that time the real circumstances were very generally surmised, they were known certainly by many of the opposition peers, and are now matters of history.

When the Duke of Wellington failed in his attempt to construct a cabinet, the king found himself in an awkward predicament—neither was Lord Grey himself well pleased with his own position. The people had shown that the Reform Bill they were determined to obtain. There could be now no mistake about the matter—the bill must be passed peaceably, if possible—if not, it was clear that force would certainly be employed. The alternative was plainly, the bill or civil war. The king, terrified by this fearful condition of affairs, gave in writing his formal consent to create as many peers as Lord Grey and the Chancellor should deem requisite, for the purpose of carrying the bill.[1]

[1] The words of this remarkable document were as follows:—'The king grants permission to Earl Grey, and to his Chancellor, Lord Brougham, to create such a number of peers as will be sufficient to ensure the passing of the Reform Bill—first calling up peers' eldest sons. (Signed) WILLIAM R.
'Windsor, May 17, 1832.'

On the 17th, Lord Grey stated in the House of Peers, that he had been recalled, but also said, that he was as yet unable to say whether he remained a minister, because he was not yet assured of being able to carry the bill. On the 18th, however, his doubts were dispelled—he now entertained, he declared, 'a confident expectation of being able to carry it unimpaired and immediately.' He refused to give his reasons for now entertaining this belief, but it would appear that he was by no means sure of carrying the bill, even though he had the king's promise to make peers, and would not even say that he was a minister until he was certain of the secession of the opposition—that secession was brought about in an extraordinary manner, and the ministers became acquainted with the determination of the peers, on the 18th of May.

When Lord Grey was recalled, he together with the Chancellor had an audience of the king, who received them with evident emotion, being annoyed and angry, as well as alarmed, and his pride being hurt, by his defeat and humiliation. The interview took place, the king and the two peers, contrary to custom, standing during the whole of it—Sir Herbert Taylor, the king's private secretary, being also present. Both Lord Grey and the Chancellor firmly declined to return to office, unless a promise was given by the king, that he would create as many peers as might be necessary to secure a majority in the House of Lords. The king was now helpless and obliged to yield—he did so, with unmistakeable reluctance, how-

ever. So soon as the promise was given, the Chancellor, by way of precaution, begged to have it in writing—which request was also acceded to—and the paper, containing the written promise of the king, was given to the Chancellor.[1]

One expedient remained, however, by which the dreaded evil of acting on this permission might yet be prevented. Before resorting to a measure so distasteful to all concerned in it—so certain seriously to shake the constitution itself—it was supposed not improper to attempt to employ personal influence with individual peers, in the hope of persuading them to withdraw their opposition to the Reform Bill; and this is said to have been done by Sir Herbert Taylor,

[1] The whole of this proceeding was so peculiar, that it deserves to be minutely described. The excitement, and anger, and hurt pride of the king were very evident, and marked by two unusual circumstances in the interview with Lord Grey and the Chancellor; the one was, that he kept them both standing during the whole time, 'the only time this happened to either of them;' the other, that Sir Herbert Taylor was kept in the room. The Chancellor's asking for a written promise Lord Grey deemed harsh and uncalled for. 'I wonder,' he said, as soon as they left the presence, to the Chancellor, 'you could have the heart to press it, when you saw the state he was in.' The Chancellor replied: 'You will soon see reason to think I was right:' and when Lord Grey learned that Sir H. Taylor had written in the manner described in the text, he is said to have confessed that the wisdom and forethought of the Chancellor had prevented a great mischief.

The paper on which this promise was given is missing from the papers of Lord Brougham, to whom it was originally entrusted, but at the time was seen by many persons, one of whom remarked, 'I never saw so large a matter on so small a bit of paper.' (Lord Sefton.)

who, being present at the interview with the king and his ministers, was able to state, from his personal knowledge the results of that remarkable audience. And he is reported to have written to certain of the more vehement of the opposition peers, without the knowledge certainly of Lord Grey or the Chancellor, and probably without the privity of the king, giving a history of what had passed and the fearful result of the interview, suggesting, at the same time, that the only way of averting this great misfortune was for the peers addressed to withdraw their opposition, and allow the bill to pass, that being a smaller evil than a wholesale creation of peers. The result of this proceeding was the consent, under pressure, as described by Lord Harewood, of the opposition to withdraw; and Sir Herbert Taylor, on the 17th, was able to write, in the following confident terms, a circular to the hostile Lords, and with the king's authority:—

'St. James's Palace, May 17, 1832.

'My dear Lord,—I am honoured with his Majesty's commands to acquaint your lordship that all difficulties to the arrangements in progress will be obviated by a declaration in the House of Peers to-night from a sufficient number of Peers, that in consequence of the present state of affairs, they have come to the resolution of dropping their further opposition to the Reform Bill, so that it may pass without delay, and as nearly as possible in its present shape.—I have the honour to be, yours sincerely,

(Signed) 'Herbert Taylor.'

If these statements and dates be accurate, (and I believe them to be so,) it is clear that Lord Grey was far from satisfied that the power to make Peers was sufficient for his purpose—neither is it certain that he would have exercised the power he possessed, had the opposition remained stanch. His object in obtaining the promise of the king was to terrify the Peers into secession, and not to obtain a majority by creation. On the 17th of May he had the king's promise, but he said he was not yet sure of being able to pass the bill in all its essentials; but on the 18th he knew that the promise had brought about the end he desired—i.e. the Peers, he had learned from Sir Herbert Taylor, were frightened, and in their turn had consented to secede. Then, but not till then, he consented to remain minister, saying now he could carry the bill.[1]

In after times these circumstances were often discussed by the chief actors in them,—and they, that is, Lord Grey and the Chancellor, both declared that if the Conservative lords had stood firm, the reform administration was defeated, together with their bill, because they would probably not have exacted from

[1] From this time forward the situation of the ministry, in relation to the king, was of a less friendly character than formerly, and the queen was now evidently *openly* hostile. When the ministry resigned, her attorney and solicitor-general resigned also. She did not re-appoint them on the return of Lord Grey, but chose others out of parliament, and, as she said, 'unconnected with politics.'

the king the fulfilment of the promise they had compelled him to give.[1] This declaration gives rise to serious reflections;—it proves, beyond all doubt, that Lord Grey and the Chancellor were wholly ignorant of the extent and intensity of the popular excitement. They had raised a spirit over which, in fact, they had lost control—most unwisely trifling with the peace and happiness of a great nation—because apparently utterly ignorant of the terrible risks which they thus rashly encountered. Had the opposition peers stood firm—and had Lord Grey retired without having exercised the power confided to him by the king—the Whig party would at once and for ever have been set aside—a bolder race of politicians would have taken the lead of the people—civil war would have been dared—and the House of Lords, possibly the throne itself, would have been swept away in the tempest that would thus have been raised. Fortunately for the fame of Lord Grey and the Lord Chancellor, fortunately for the happiness of England, the practical good sense of the Duke of Wellington extricated the nation from the terrible difficulty into which the House of Lords and the administration had brought it.[2] Yet

[1] In proof of this most remarkable declaration, see Lord Brougham's *Political Philosophy*, vol. iii. pp.308-9; and his letter to Lord John Russell on the *finality* dispute.

[2] The example set by the Duke in reality was the cause of the secession. He withdrew after his explanation on the 17th, and did not return till the night after the passing of the bill. If the Duke committed a blunder on the 4th of November, when he declared against all reform, he nobly redeemed his error on the 17th of May, by yielding to the popular demand.

was not the Duke himself wholly undeserving of blame: his unwise declaration of November, 1830, was the first great mistake,—had he then yielded, even partially, the people for the moment would have been satisfied, reform would have proceeded more slowly indeed, and step by step—but still an advance would have been continuously made, and the great risks of 1832 would not have been run—and, in the meantime, practical improvements in our systems of law and finance would daily have been proposed and carried—the utter stagnation of trade and manufactures, which the fearful excitement attendant on passing the Reform Bill produced, would not have occurred—nor would his political opponents have triumphed, excluding for many years from office and power the party which looked to him as a leader. His error on that fatal evening of November derogates largely from his fame, both as a party chief and as a statesman.

Thus was the Reform Bill carried,—an ever memorable instance in the history of our constitution of the potency of public opinion,—of the practical character of our people, and of that remarkable reverence for law and constitutional forms which is felt by every class among us. The patience and steady, resolute perseverance of the people, on the one hand, their anxiety to avoid, if possible, any appeal to force, and their eager desire to employ only constitutional means for the attainment of their ends, are alike remarkable and worthy of admiration; so, on

the other hand, the final secession of the peers, their most unwilling, indeed, but still frank, and, once determined, complete and unhesitating compliance with the popular feeling, cannot be too highly praised. After such an experience, we need never despair of being able to obtain all really beneficial changes in our institutions, by peaceful and by legal means. What the general intelligence of the nation demands, will be, and in good time, conceded.

Had there been a minority at this time respectable by wealth, numbers, and intelligence on the side of the peers, the signal defeat which they sustained would not have occurred. But, in fact, the common sense of the nation was against them on this occasion. The anomalies in our system of representation were too glaring to be seriously denied—too senseless to be in earnest defended. A few noisy and interested partisans might yet lift up their voices in its support, and point to the general prosperity of the people and the comparative good government they enjoyed, and might eagerly ask, Why alter a system leading to such happy results? But the people were not satisfied, were not convinced. They asserted, on the contrary, that they were well off, not in consequence, but in spite of the errors of our representative system,—and they hoped, by remedying these errors, to insure the benefits they already enjoyed, and to procure others which they believed were prevented by the anomalies and injustice against which the Reform Bill was directed; and to this feeling, sanctioned as it was by

common sense, the House of Lords could not longer continue its resistance. Resistance, indeed, was maintained too long—sound policy counselled an earlier concession—by which means the popular good will towards the lords themselves, and to the House of Lords as a political institution, would have been retained and strengthened. The opposition peers, however, by their unwise and pertinacious hostility to the measure so earnestly desired by the people, taught them a dangerous lesson, by proving thus incontestably that what the people deemed not merely beneficial laws, but laws absolutely needed for their well-being, could be passed without the aid of the House of Peers, and in defiance of their hostility; for no man could now assert that the Reform Act had the real assent of that House. Nominally, indeed, their sanction was given to the bill, but it was given under duress, and, as they themselves declared, upon compulsion,—an unfortunate phrase, and in this instance unfortunately a true one. Possibly, however, as some compensation for the mischief thus arising, the lords may themselves have derived useful instruction from this painful and humiliating defeat. They may, and we believe, have learned, that the House of Peers, with all other portions of our institutions, is dependent wholly for its existence, as well as real power, upon the general good opinion and respect of the nation—and that there is a point beyond which to brave and oppose that opinion is to put in jeopardy, not merely their moral influence, but their very political exist-

ence. In this instance, too, the nation generally believed that the House acted under the influence of sordid and ambitious views, and that the national welfare was but a pretext to cover their own selfish purposes. The long-continued and reckless opposition given to the Reform Bill thus shook the popular faith for the time, not only in the wisdom, but the honesty of that House; and further, the ultimate secession of the opposition—wise, indeed, but tardy, unwilling, and compelled, unfortunately taught the people to believe that the peers in this instance were as pusillanimous as they were unpatriotic.

The Duke of Wellington and the real opposition having retired, the discussions on the bill in committee proceeded rapidly, and with few interruptions—the divisions which occurred only marking the insignificant minority which still remained to resist the measure. No amendments of any moment were carried, and the only speech of importance was one by Lord Durham, in defence of his own favourite provision, by which the metropolitan districts were enabled to return members to parliament. This speech compelled the opposition peers to render the noble speaker unwilling and most reluctant applause. On Friday, June 1, the labours of the committee ended, and the third reading of the bill was fixed for Monday, the 4th of June, when the small remnant of opposition were cheered by the re-appearance of Lord Harrowby in their thin ranks; and again a debate occurred upon the whole measure, and the late proceedings in the Lords with respect to it. The old lamentations were

for the last time indulged in—the degradation of the House, and the destruction and permanent annihilation of its dependence bewailed, and prophecies of coming mischief freely hazarded. Among the evils thus foretold, the most earnestly deprecated and vehemently insisted on were those that would result from the existence of political unions; and great blame was cast upon the administration, more especially upon Lord Grey, because steps had not been taken to suppress, or at least control, these supposed mischievous combinations. Lord Grey, in his reply to the many animadversions to which he had been subjected, gave a sufficient answer to all these objurgations—an answer the wisdom and sufficiency of which time has shown. 'My lords,' he said, 'such associations have taken place before now. The noble Earl (Harrowby) is old enough, as well as myself, to remember, although neither of us sat in parliament at that time, the associations which existed throughout the country at the end of the American war, which sent their delegates to London, and held permanent sittings in the metropolis, and corresponded with their associates all over the country—supported, too, by Mr. Pitt, then in all the enthusiasm of his love for reform. Those associations passed speedily away, because the grievance which gave them birth was removed;[1] and I do

[1] This assertion is hardly accurate. Those associations were formed to obtain parliamentary reform, but they failed, and the grievance remained. Mr Pitt, however, became prime minister, and the political world was occupied by the personal and party contest which followed.

hope, trust, and firmly believe, that this measure being passed—this satisfaction given to the country, and the security of the government being thus established, we shall hear little more of these political unions.' He refused, therefore, peremptorily to propose any new laws for the purpose of suppressing them. As Lord Grey anticipated, in a few months every trace of these associations disappeared: the energies of the people were employed after the old forms of the constitution, and the elections under the Reform Act occupied the attention and gratified the pride of the newly created constituencies, and none of the horrors occurred which the dismal prophets of the opposition had so boldly foretold.

The division which followed, marked the condition of the House.

On the third reading:—

Contents	106
Non-contents	22
Majority	84

The bill was passed without any further division, and at once sent down to the Commons. Mr. Stuart Wortley, upon the arrival of the messengers of the Lords, and when the formal motion to call them in was made, evinced his own chagrin and his father's, by observing upon the degraded condition of the House of Lords, and by protesting against the solemn mockery in which he said the House of Commons was indulging. 'I do not consider,' said the angry and

imprudent son of Lord Wharncliffe, 'this to be a message from the House of Lords, and I protest against its being received as such.' The House took no notice of this petulant outbreak, but appointed the next day for the consideration of the Lords' amendments.

Lord John Russell, on the morrow, the 5th of June, explained the nature of the small and insignificant changes made by the Lords, and moved that they should be acquiesced in. He prefaced his observations by 'congratulating the House that the bill had been returned unchanged in any of its essential provisions, and unimpaired in its efficiency.' This gave Sir Edward Sugden an opportunity of uttering a series of lamentations and doleful warnings, and preferring what he deemed heavy charges against the ministers. The chief matter of accusation was the means by which the bill had been carried. The threatened mischief was the inevitable continuance of change. The extent and intensity of the learned gentleman's fears, and the poverty of his imagination, were alike manifested by the hacknied rhetorical figure which served him as an illustration on this solemn occasion.

'I will not again go over,' he said, 'the dangers which will in my opinion ensue from the passing of this bill. I fear they will be very great—I fear they will be far greater than honourable gentlemen opposite imagine—but when the bill has passed, I shall be ready and willing to do all in my power to avert its

dangerous tendency and injurious consequences. I think that those men who, by opening the floodgates, have let in a fierce and impetuous torrent, which will rush madly forward, destroying everything in its way, will be swept away by the force of the power which they have themselves created. As regards myself, I have no apprehensions. I shall float like a worthless straw on the surface of the stream, and I shall see those who are possessed of dignity and wealth sink beneath it.'

Of the means employed to carry the bill, all of which he imputed as matters of blame to the administration, he made a long enumeration:—the violent language of the press, and of the speeches at public meetings—the conduct of the *Times* newspaper—and the letters written by Colonel Jones under the signature of 'Radical,'—the extent of the changes proposed—and proposed, too, in defiance of the opposition of the Lord Chancellor, who was asserted to be particularly displeased by the 10*l.* franchise,—the threat by Lord Milton, that he should refuse to pay taxes until the bill was passed—the similar threat insinuated, rather than made by Master Brougham, the Lord Chancellor's brother—the run upon the Bank for gold—the run upon the savings-banks—the conduct of the political unions, which he called rash and local parliaments,—and, lastly, the degradation of the House of Lords, were all with a cruel pertinacity strung together as reasons to justify his woful vaticinations—all which had been simply ludicrous, but

that Sir Robert Peel gave the complaints dignity and importance by reiterating and enforcing them in a tone, indeed, and manner, and with an ability which in every way formed a striking contrast with the splenetic and ineffective attack of the learned gentleman. One declaration made by Sir Robert Peel, when read in conjunction with the statements subsequently made by Lord Brougham, with the acquiescence of Lord Grey, is peculiarly interesting. He stated, that had his opinion been acted upon by the Lords, they would not have voted for the second reading of the bill, but would have compelled the ministers to make a majority by a wholesale creation.

This statement was evidently directed against Lord Wharncliffe and others, who, by deserting the opposition, gave the ministers a small majority on the second reading. 'I have no hesitation in saying,' was the assertion of the right honourable baronet, 'that if I had been a peer, I would, previous to the second reading of the Reform Bill, have persisted in opposing it, perfectly uninfluenced by the consideration as to whether such a course of proceeding might possibly lead to the creation of sixty or a hundred peers. I would rather have forced the government into the unconstitutional exercise of such a power, than have refrained from giving my opposition to the Reform Bill.' The case, however, he considered completely altered by the second reading of the bill, by the failure of his Majesty to frame another administration, and the dangerous condition of the country attendant thereon,

which he thought justified the secession that then took place. If Lord Brougham's supposition be accurate —if, indeed, the ministry would not have enforced the performance of the king's promise to make peers—if they had resolved to retreat before a hostile majority of the Lords—if, under those circumstances, the king had believed himself justified in seeking a ministry not pledged to carry some reform, Sir Robert Peel would have been minister, and would then have had to bear the terrible responsibility of braving the anger of what might be fairly considered the unanimous people of the empire. A fierce struggle would inevitably have followed. The ministers might have been successful in suppressing for the time direct and violent opposition; but even this success would have been obtained by bloodshed, and we should have been made a discontented people, eager to seize every opportunity offered us of open resistance, and hidden secret opposition. I cannot believe that Sir Robert Peel, when, in after years, he had by experience learned the futility of his own apprehensions, still adhered to the opinion that such a dogged resistance by the peers was the policy that would have proved most conducive to their own honour and their country's welfare. One reason, then, given by him for the opinions expressed, if viewed with reference to subsequent events, gives, I think, great weight to this my belief. Speaking of the menace to make peers, and looking upon it as a precedent, he put this remarkable case. 'Whenever the government comes to deal with

the corn laws, the precedent furnished by the present occasion will be appealed to; and if they should be placed in similar circumstances of excitement and of difficulty, the occasion will be made a plea for overturning the independence of the House of Lords. The evil will not be confined to this instance, but it will present itself in a similar shape whenever the government brings forward measures considered by the people favourable to their interests, and to which the House of Lords may feel in some degree opposed.' Sir Robert Peel's own estimation of his difficulties, when dealing with the corn laws in 1844, and of the House of Lords as an obstacle on that occasion, would be a subject of curious and interesting speculation. The passing of the Reform Bill assuredly did not increase his difficulties on that occasion; and if the existence of a reformed House of Commons gave him power to carry his celebrated proposal to repeal those laws, he could hardly deem the measure which created that reformed House so calamitous as he had previously supposed.

Lord Milton now rose, and acknowledged that he certainly had declared he would resist the payment of taxes until the Bill was carried, and justified his conduct by asserting that 'occasions may arise when individuals would not be bound to follow the strict letter of the law; if, I repeat, such a principle as this is to be admitted, it must also be admitted that cases may arise where individuals are justified in acting in conformity with such a doctrine.' In short, Lord

Milton said, that times might arise when a revolution was justifiable, and that the past crisis was one of them. The major proposition is one which few Englishmen would be inclined to dispute; the minor, however, in which on the present occasion the difficulty lies, would not certainly now meet with such general support, though when the noble lord made his formidable declaration, it was very commonly assented to. Whig party interests then coincided with the popular wishes, and politicians of that party have never lacked courage in the pursuit of their personal ends. Were they as lenient towards others who apply their own doctrines at periods inconvenient to the Whig projects—if they were as gentle and considerate when attempting to preserve the peace as they are when it suits their purpose bold and unscrupulous in endangering it, the impartial historian would judge of their revolutionary proceedings in a manner very different from that in which he must now regard them. They appear to assume for themselves a monopoly of political wisdom; when they say that a revolution is justifiable it must be so—and incitements to resistance are praiseworthy—are patriotic; but when they declare that opposition to established authority is uncalled for, then everything that may be supposed to induce a revolution is in the highest degree criminal, and deserving of severe and unsparing punishment. Thus they show that they have two measures—two rules of morality—and the incidents of this period illustrate very plainly the mode in which they

employ these varying and accommodating rules of conduct.

Mr. Stanley followed Lord Milton in the debate, and most successfully answered Sir Edward Sugden, demolishing with unsparing skill the poor fabric raised by his disappointment and spleen. He threw aside Lord Milton's doctrines both as respected the propriety of resistance and the constitutional power of the Lords to interfere with the Reform Bill, and then, without further preface, rushing upon Sir Edward Sugden, he with a dexterity and vigour almost peculiar to himself, proceeded step by step to hunt him through all his assertions—and to rend to tatters the flimsy pretences upon which those assertions rested. His answer to the learned gentleman's rhetoric was short and sufficient. 'When the honourable and learned gentleman talks of those who opened the flood-gates and let loose the torrent, I ask who it was when the waters might have been allowed to flow off in many separate single channels, and through each channel one by one, forced the whole mass of them into one irresistible current—and when they found the mound which they had erected on the point of giving way beneath them, abandoned those flood-gates and left to other workmen the task of opening them, or the alternative of being overwhelmed by the breaking down of the mound? But is the stream of reform the only one they have rashly attempted to confine? Have they not dammed up other waters of bitterness which might have flooded off harmless? Was it not the avowed

principle of the late administration to take no step till they were compelled to do so—to resist all demand for improvement of institutions as long as they could, on the ground that when once you begin to mend, there was no knowing where to stop? They acted consistently upon that principle, but they acted upon it till they could go on no longer.'[1]

The unwise resistance on the part of the Duke of Wellington's government to the small proposals of the opposition, with regard to East Retford and Penryn, suggested and justified a portion of this reply—the demand for a large reform became formidable only when all hopes of a partial and progressive change were lost.

The danger and possible inconvenience resulting from the mode in which the measure had been forced through the House of Lords, Mr. Stanley admitted—but threw the whole responsibility upon the peers themselves—denying that the government could be charged with any share of it; and, if we calmly consider the circumstances of that excited time, and weigh fairly the difficulties in which the administration was placed, the validity of the defence will, I think, be admitted. The steps of the whole proceed-

[1] This charge against the administration of the Duke of Wellington is not justified by facts. The administrative, as distinguished from constitutional reforms, proposed by the Duke of Wellington and Sir Robert Peel, were not only wise in themselves, but skilfully effected. They were, indeed, step by step reformers, but their progress was steady and uninterrupted.

ings can be described almost in a sentence. All reform was denied by the Duke of Wellington, at a time when the nation was peculiarly excited, and eager for some improvement. The House of Commons upon this defeated, and thereby destroyed his administration. Lord Grey, called upon to preside over the counsels of the country, thought, and wisely thought, that if any attempt were made to satisfy this wish of the nation, it should be so made, as by its extent and importance to meet the immediate demand, and to prevent for the future all further organic changes. To this end the Reform Bill was proposed—was carried through the House of Commons triumphantly—and the House of Lords a second time refused their assent to the measure. Lord Grey hereupon advised the king to grant him the power to make a large creation of peers. The king declined to act upon this advice, and Lord Grey and his administration resigned. The king and the opposition now attempted to frame a ministry—they fail—and Lord Grey is recalled—and he, consistent throughout, says, 'It is impossible for me to return, and undertake the government of the country, unless I can pass this measure, to which I am pledged. If I return, I must be armed with the power to make a majority, if such is not willingly conceded to me.' He receives the promise on the part of the king; the opposition hearing that this promise has been given, retire, withdraw their opposition, and the bill is passed. Every part of this transaction was in the spirit of the constitution; and if either party can be taxed with straining

to its utmost its working machinery, it was the opposition. The House of Lords is a checking power, but there is a point, beyond which it is clear to every prudent man, their controlling influence cannot be enforced. Generally they have, with great sagacity, determined the question, as to whether this point has been arrived at, and have yielded so as to obtain favour from concession. In the case of Catholic Emancipation and of the Reform Bill they pushed their opposition one step too far. Their leaders, in both instances, misunderstood the state of the public mind, and almost fatally underrated the extent and intensity of the catholic feeling in Ireland and of the reform feeling in England. A false move in the game was twice the consequence of this mistake. The Duke of Wellington retrieved the error by his retreat—and the experience of the last eighteen years has proved that England was moved by no wild notions — governed by no levelling theories—when her people so loudly demanded a change, sanctioned, apparently at the time, by common sense, and since justified by actual experiment. The mistake on the part of the peers was simply one of policy, and, being soon repaired, we have every reason to hope that no mischievous consequences will follow. For the possible danger, however, they, and not the administration of Lord Grey, were answerable. If, indeed, the House of Lords had persisted in their opposition, and Lord Grey had shrunk from employing the power he possessed of compelling them to yield, he would have

deserved severe reprehension, and men would have said he had sacrificed the peace of the nation to the vanity of his order. Fortunately, the practical good sense and authority of the Duke of Wellington saved him this trial of his constancy, and the people from civil war. This last consideration is merely hypothetical. In all that actually occurred, Lord Grey was not only undeserving of blame, but worthy of national respect and gratitude for the calmness, steadfastness, and good faith he evinced throughout this trying period; and whatsoever of danger was run—whatsoever of evil resulted—must be charged upon a majority of the House of Peers, and the leaders whom they followed.

After Mr. Stanley's defence, little occurred in the debate worthy of remark. Mr. Croker repeated his objections, and gave a voice to his disappointment and anger—but the nation was in too good a humour —too well satisfied with their hardly earned triumphs to be offended by his objurgations, or to pay attention to his dismal warnings. Mr. Hume, indeed, gave the world to understand, that he considered the Reform Act but as a means to an end—one step—an important one, however, towards many other changes, which he believed necessary. This declaration inspired terror in the minds both of the ministers and the Conservative party, and was the first symptom of the division that was eventually to take place between the Radical party, and the Whigs with whom they had for some time been acting. The real difference between them,

though great, was nevertheless exaggerated, in consequence of certain ambiguities of language, which excited partisans would not allow to be explained. Fear on one side, lest organic changes should proceed so far as to overturn the monarchy, and bring on revolution and anarchy: impatience on the other—and suspicion as to the honesty and sincerity of the Whigs—created disunion in the ranks of those who had hitherto stood together as reformers; and in the end enabled the Conservative party, with the assistance of the Court, again to become a formidable power in the state—and Sir Robert Peel again to become prime minister, as the chief of that party. We shall hereafter learn in what way this result was brought about.

The Lords' amendments having thus been acquiesced in by the Commons, the bill was returned to the House of Peers, and on the 7th of June—a memorable day in the annals of our constitution—received the royal assent—not given indeed by the king himself, but by commission.[1]

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[1] The commissioners were, the Lord Chancellor, Marquis Wellesley, Marquis of Lansdowne, Earl Grey, and Lords Holland and Durham. This absence on the part of the king was the result of his anger at the treatment he had received from the people, and more especially the press, upon the resignation of the administration. He declared: 'that nothing on earth should induce him to go in person to give his assent to the bill in deference to what is called the sense of the people, or in deference to the dictates of the press, their ruler, after the treatment he had received from both;—that he had endeavoured to discharge his duty to the best of his judgment, and according to

the dictates of his conscience; that he had been misrepresented, calumniated, and insulted; that the insults had not been confined to him, but they had been heaped upon the queen, on all belonging to him, and that the law had been declared not to be strong enough to protect him and them against such insult.' He declared he would not cringe or bow; and, despising the applause of the mob, he would not, to regain his popularity, degrade himself by courting applause which he had learned to despise.' In fact, he never forgot the coercion to which he had been subjected, and never forgave the ministers who had placed him in a position in which he was obliged to yield to it. His ministers earnestly entreated him to give his assent in person, hinting, that by so doing, he would at once dispel the ill-feeling which preceding events had produced; but he resolutely resisted every entreaty, and fiercely expressed his anger against what he was pleased to term the mob, and vowed he would not truckle to those who had so grossly insulted him. The question was, he said, one of feeling, not of duty; and 'as a sovereign and a gentleman, he was bound to refuse.'

CHAPTER V.

FROM THE PASSING OF THE ENGLISH REFORM BILL, TO THE END OF THE SESSION OF 1832.

THE public attention had been so completely and so exclusively directed to the English Reform Bill, that those measures which related to Ireland and Scotland passed almost without remark from persons out of doors, although naturally exciting the attention and interests of Scotch and Irish members. The second reading of the Irish Bill was moved by Mr. Stanley, on Friday, the 25th of May, in a speech marked by all the characteristic ability, and most of the faults of the Right Honourable Secretary. His professed purpose was to prove that the proposed measure would in no degree endanger the established church in Ireland, but this object he unfortunately connected with another, which he ever pursued with great eagerness and reckless imprudence, and that was to attack and annoy Mr. O'Connell. Yet, at this moment, it was his duty, as the person representing the administration upon all Irish matters, to have attempted to conciliate the great popular leader

of Catholic Ireland—to have given him no plausible excuse for agitation—and to have compelled him to confess that, in manner at least, everything was done that his sensitive countrymen could desire. If the Secretary for Ireland had shown himself thus wise and conciliatory, he might easily have persuaded the Irish people, through their leaders, that if his proposed measure came short of their wishes, the fault was not in the government, but in the peculiarity of their position; that there were feelings and prejudices which obstructed for the present the government in their intentions with respect to Ireland but that, by care and prudence, these prejudices would eventually be made to disappear. He should have consulted Mr. O'Connell—have won him by courtesy and respect; in short, he ought to have endeavoured to make him a friend, instead of employing all his sarcasm and ingenuity to make and keep him a violent and inveterate enemy.[1] Unfortunately, Mr. Stanley,

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[1] On Thursday, Dec. 15, 1831, Lord Grey made this wise and generous declaration respecting Mr. O'Connell:—

'I believe it only remains for me to make a few observations upon a remark that fell from a noble earl on the other side of the House. Speaking of a particular individual, he thought it necessary that a denial should be given to an assertion of his, 'that the highest offices of the law were within his power.' [Mr. O'Connell always asserted that the post of chief baron was offered him by the Whig government, and was by him refused.—To myself, personally, he stated this.] 'I may,' added Lord Grey, 'subject myself to reproach and censure from noble lords opposite, but I have no hesitation in stating, that knowing the extent of his abilities, and power of rendering service to the

though a vigorous and fiery debater, is without some qualities which are essentially necessary in all who deserve the appellation of statesmen; and more especially needed in one who has to govern an excitable, long oppressed people, a people for whom law has always been tyranny, and religion an ever active curse. A statesman should be an inquirer, not a disputant; with his mind always open to receive new ideas and fresh information, he should be ever ready to reconsider his own views and opinions, and to discuss, in order to understand and weigh those of others: to use a hackneyed, but, in this instance, an apt and im-

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government, I should have been very glad, if it could have been done, to detach him from the course in which he is now engaged, and attach him to the service of his country. The silk gown he got was no more than he had a right to expect, considering his station at the bar. Any other situation, he pursuing the proper course, and showing himself a peaceable and well disposed subject, his abilities and reputation, I think the noble earl will not say it would be too much for me to admit, entitled him to expect. But this is all: any offer made to him of any such situation, so as to enable him to say that it had been in his power and rejected, is a thing of which I am totally ignorant. Certainly no such proposal or offer has been made by me, and none such, under the circumstances that have hitherto existed, could be countenanced or sanctioned by me; and I cannot believe that from any other person anything approaching to such an offer can have been made.'—*Mirror of Parliament*, 1832, vol. i. p. 96.

Again, on Friday, April 6, 1832, Lord Grey said:—'The noble earl has now, for about the hundredth time, repeated that I have stated that I made an offer to Mr. O'Connell of a situation in the government, which the noble earl was also pleased to call 'a bribe' to that gentleman. Not only did I not state any such thing, but I stated directly the contrary; and in as plain terms as the English language could supply, did I con-

portant distinction, he should always seek truth and not be ever striving for victory. But Lord Stanley contemns what he does not understand; and, as his knowledge is small, his contempt is almost boundless. His manner is unintentionally arrogant and offensive. He deals with other men's prejudices as if he could have none himself, and would at any time recklessly insult a whole people, for the small pleasure of making a vigorous sally in a speech, or risk a kingdom's safety, if by so doing he could wound an opponent in debate.

Quick to see the weak point in an opponent's

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tradict what had over and over again been asserted, that an offer had been made to Mr. O'Connell of a place in the government. But, at the same time, I did state, and am prepared to repeat, that if Mr. O'Connell had pursued that course, which I think would have been more consonant to the duty of a good subject than the one he has thought proper to adopt, there was no situation in the government to which his eminent talents and reputation at the bar would not have entitled him to aspire. I stated that, and I declared further, that I should have been rejoiced if any forbearance on the part of the government—ay, if any attempt at conciliation on their part had had the effect of inducing Mr. O'Connell to pursue a line of conduct which would, I think, have been materially conducive to the peace and tranquillity of Ireland. There is not, I am persuaded, any person who hears me, who looks at the situation of that country, and considers the weight and power of that gentleman's influence, who will not agree with me that it would have been most desirable, if practicable, to bring him over to the cause of good order.'—*Mirror of Parliament*, 1832, vol. ii. p. 1627.

Unfortunately, this wise and temperate counsel was lost on Mr. Stanley, who seemed resolved to keep Mr. O'Connell in violent hostility to the government.

argument, possessed of a ready and voluble eloquence, and the art of clear, concise, and forcible exposition, rapid and effective narration, his power in debate is at all times formidable; but lacking, as he does, knowledge and temper, he is a dangerous, though on occasion a useful auxiliary to a government. His impetuosity and imprudence inevitably bring trouble upon the administration with which he is allied, so that the only chance of safety for his friends is for them to show clearly that *he* has no influence over their acts, and that *they* do not intend to be held responsible for his language. In the real business of government he has always been found a most perillous colleague, his opinions being a bundle of fierce and intractable prejudices, which he will not himself investigate, or allow others to impugn. The Irish Coercion Bill and the Canadian rebellion illustrate, the one, the system of his rule, the other, the consequence of it.

The very measure now proposed as one of reform, and a reform made necessary because reform was now certain to take place in England and Scotland—this very measure was formed upon a principle totally different from that upon which the provisions of the English bill were based. The franchise was described in terms studiously ambiguous; and when Mr. O'Connell protested against it, as leading inevitably to the annihilation of the Irish constituencies, his predictions were scouted and his entreaties disre-

garded. A great show was indeed made of a desire to frame equal laws for the two countries, and profuse professions of candour, fairness, and liberality were indulged in; but the franchise was in principle wholly different from that of England, both in the boroughs and counties, and the description of the right seemed as if intended to promote litigation.

When in 1829 the Emancipation Act passed, the forty-shilling franchise was at one sweep extinguished, under the pretext that the voters of this class could not be independent—the real reason, however, being, that the power hitherto exercised over them by the landlord had been suddenly seized by the priest. This act of disfranchisement was, nevertheless, ill-considered, hastily adopted, and left on the minds of the poor Irish a sense of injustice and insult: of injustice, because under the one description of a forty-shilling franchise, three very different tenures had been affected,—and of insult, because the measure was palpably directed against the Catholics and their priesthood. Mr. O'Connell consequently now asked the government to rectify the mistake that had inadvertently been committed in 1829. He asked them to reinstate the forty-shilling freeholders in their franchise, thus really doing what they pretended to desire—viz., assimilating the Irish to the English franchise. In England, the forty-shilling freeholder is allowed to vote, why refuse him that privilege in Ireland? Mr. O'Connell, when he asked this question,

well knew the cause of the difference; he was also quite certain that it would not be acknowledged. The large majority of these small freeholders were Catholics, and their influence in the elections was feared because of their religion. 'I contend that the bill now proposed,' said Mr. O'Connell, 'is not calculated to benefit Ireland, and I am sure it has been framed with no good feeling to that country; on the contrary, it rests on a narrow and bigoted feeling.' In another part of the same speech, he thus described the diverse nature of the forty-shilling franchise:—'In Ireland the forty-shilling freeholders were divided into three classes—those who were proprietors in fee; those who held land for two or three lives; and lastly those (and this class formed the great bulk of the voters), who held for a term of years, and had an annual interest to that amount in the land. It will be recollected that complaints were made that the landlords, for election purposes, made voters of these latter classes, but it could not be urged against the former. The bill (the bill accompanying the Emancipation Bill), however, not only disfranchised the fictitious voters, but also the forty-shilling freeholders in fee.' Against this proceeding, Mr. Huskisson, and Lord Palmerston, and Lord Duncannon, at the time solemnly protested, on the ground of its injustice. Mr. O'Connell not unfairly now asked, as there was to be a reform of Irish as well as English abuses, that this gross and palpable wrong should be redressed. The

ministry had no valid answer; they indeed half asserted that there was some compact or understanding in 1829, by which they considered themselves bound not to disturb the franchise. When pressed, however, they receded from this justification, which, if it had rested on fact, was invalid. The very purpose of their present bill was to regulate the franchise, and to free it from wrong and abuse. There was an abuse which no one denied, and yet the ministry most unwisely, with great impolicy, as well as injustice, contemptuously turned a deaf ear to Mr. O'Connell's solicitation; and Mr. Stanley very plainly suggested one reason for the refusal which Mr. O'Connell met with, when he said, 'Certainly the honourable and learned member for Kerry has not taken the best mode to conciliate me, assuming that I act on personal grounds and motives.' But Mr. Stanley was dealing with a great national wrong, and his own petty pique might as well have been silent on the occasion. Ireland was not to be injured because he was offended. That she was wronged, no one can doubt—that the franchise which was conceded to the English was denied to the Irish freeholders, cannot be denied—that the ministers themselves acknowledged that an injustice had been done, is proved by their own words—that this injustice was continued, the division showed. Mr. O'Connell's most reasonable proposal to restore the rights of the freeholders in fee was negatived by the ministry, with the assistance of

the regular opposition;[1] nearly all the Whig friends of Ireland not connected with the administration, Sir John Newport being among the most distinguished, voting on the side of Mr. O'Connell, and lamenting the course adopted by the ministry. Sir John Newport, feeling that his career was nearly run, seized this opportunity of thus expressing his opinion of the ministerial measure called a Reform Bill: 'It is doubtful whether the infirm state of my health will allow me on a future occasion to go into the details of this bill, and therefore I will take this opportunity of saying, that although there are some things in it—such as the abolition of the nomination boroughs—which will be invaluable to Ireland, yet there are some parts of it which will go very far to neutralize all its benefits—I particularly allude to the mode of registration, which I think in the highest degree defective. I cannot conceive why that plan which it has been thought proper to adopt in England has not also been adopted in Ireland."[2] Mr. O'Connell's complaints

[1] The second reading was carried against the Tory opposition on the 25th of May, the numbers being—

For the bill	246	
Against it	130	
Majority . . .	——	116

Mr O'Connell's proposal was made on the 13th of June. The ministry and the opposition voting against it.

For Mr. O'Connell's motion . .	73	
Against it	122	
Majority . . .	——	49

[2] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1832, vol. iii. p. 2537. The January number of the *Edinburgh Review* of the year 1851 contains an

might be called factious, and his warnings treated as inspired by a sinister motive, and intended simply for annoyance; but no such assertion could be hazarded with respect to Sir John Newport. He was, though an Irishman and a patriot, an old friend of the Whigs. He was possessed of property, and all his interests were intimately connected with those of his country. While endeavouring to insure peace and security for her, he sought comfort and happiness for himself. During his whole life he had opposed the Orange oligarchical rule in Ireland, and laboured to establish wise and equal laws throughout the empire; and now, when he saw power in the hands of his old political friends, and the means within their reach of contributing to the peace of his country by a simple act of justice, he was shocked to find them, regardless of their former professions, and under the influence of some petty and unworthy feeling, sowing the seeds of discontent and trouble by perpetrating an act of

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excellent article on Lord Clarendon's administration, and the following passage shows how correct were all the anticipations of failure of the Irish Reform Act: ' 'The two monstrous evils of the former state of the law [i. e. under the Act of 1832]—the dependence of franchise upon tenure, and the vexatious process of registration, which made the attainment of the right of suffrage as troublesome as a law-suit, no longer disgrace the Irish representative system. The system established by the law of 1831—[the Act passed in 1832]—broke down under two fatal defects. The Irish constituencies were on the verge of extinction (the total number of parliamentary electors for all Ireland amounting only to 72,000), when Sir William Somerville introduced what may be called the New Irish Reform Bill, establishing a franchise of the simplest nature;' *et seq.*—p. 288.

gratuitous and utterly useless wrong. The amazing folly of the proceeding must have astounded him even more than its barefaced injustice.

This bill, really unimproved, and in most of its essential particulars[1] the same as originally proposed, was sent to the Lords, and there read a second time on the 23rd of July, after a debate of little importance or interest: the only circumstance worthy of remark being the vehement opposition of the Duke of Wellington, and the somewhat strange reasons by him assigned for the opinions he entertained. The man who had passed the bill for the emancipation of the Catholics, and who had on that occasion stated that he sought by that bill to put Catholics and Protestants upon an equality as to civil rights, now openly declared that he opposed the ministerial measure of reform for Ireland, because it conferred on the Catholics the right of voting. 'Give them this right of voting,' said the noble Duke, in substance, 'and they will return the members for Ireland; they are the great majority of the people—and by this bill you allow that majority

[1] One proposal made by Mr. O'Connell, and scornfully rejected by Mr. Stanley, time has proved to have been a suggestion eminently politic and just. He complained that by the proposed measure, the country constituency would be, in fact, annihilated; and, to prevent this result, he proposed to give a vote to all persons who possessed a freehold of 5*l.* in value. He failed; and we have seen his prophecy fulfilled, and a second attempt made to form a country constituency for Ireland. Mr. Stanley did, indeed, yield grudgingly in one instance, by conferring the 10*l.* franchise, (which by the original bill was confined to freeholders,) upon persons holding under a lease of 21 years.

to have a voice in the elections. The present system gives a monopoly of this privilege to the Protestants of Ireland, and because it does so, I object to any change that can be proposed. The present state of things is, in my eyes, perfection—and any alteration must be for the worse.' If we are to construe strictly these declarations, we must conclude that the Emancipation Act of the Duke of Wellington was not intended to accomplish the purpose at which it ostensibly aimed, but was intended only as a sham and a deception. The Catholics were to fancy themselves freemen, but were nevertheless to be retained in their original bondage. The strong prejudices of the noble Duke on the unfortunate subject of parliamentary reform, clouded his judgment even on questions which he had been hitherto accustomed to regard and deal with in a large and liberal spirit, and according to the suggestions of his own clear and very practical understanding. In fact, he had relapsed into the thraldom from which he had freed himself in the memorable year of 1829. Lord Plunkett, with something of scorn, demolished the feeble fabric of the Duke of Wellington's objections. 'One fact,' he said, 'I think ought to satisfy every man not determined against convictions of this wisdom and necessity. What will the House think when I inform them that the representatives of seventeen of those boroughs, containing a population of 170,000 souls, are nominated by precisely seventeen persons? Yet, by putting an end to this iniquitous and disgraceful system,

we are, forsooth, violating the articles of the Union, and overturning the Protestant institutions of the country. This is ratiocination and statesmanlike loftiness of vision with a vengeance! Then it seems that besides violating the Union Act, we are departing from the principles of the measure of 1829. I deny that — I also deny the assumption of the noble Duke, that the forty-shilling freeholders were disfranchised on that occasion merely for the purpose of maintaining the Protestant interests in Ireland. The forty-shilling freeholders were disfranchised, not because they were what are called 'Popish electors,' but because they were in such indigent circumstances as precluded their exercising their suffrage right independently and as free agents, because they were an incapable constituency.'[1] Lord Plunkett further enlarged on the impolicy of making the Catholic and Protestant separate and hostile interests, and insisted, that if this invidious distinction were not constantly insisted on, the necessary influence of property would unite the rich and order-loving of both sects in one bond of union, and render useless the efforts of any demagogue to employ one whole sect as a means of assailing the government and disturbing the peace of the country. The wisdom of this suggestion has since been forgotten, or neglected, by many who were at that time his colleagues.

The bill, after being considered in committee, and

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, vol. iv. p. 3298.

therein incurring a very violent, if not a very effective opposition, was at length passed by the Lords, on the 30th of July, and sent to the Commons. It eventually received the royal assent by commission, on the 7th of August.

Mr. Stanley's mischievous influence on the ministerial policy with respect to Ireland was not confined to this bill for the reform of the representation of that country. Early in the session, in accordance with the recommendation of the king's speech, a committee was appointed by each House of Parliament separately to make inquiry respecting tithes in Ireland. Lord Wellesley's plan of adjustment adopted in 1823 was said to have failed—the payment of tithe in Ireland was almost universally refused, and if a distress were levied in consequence, no one would purchase the property seized. The public feeling paralyzed the law, and the property in tithe was in danger of being utterly lost, not only to the existing incumbent, but to the State, the ultimate and real possessor, unless some means could be found of escaping from the difficulty which the general feeling of the people created. The ministry proposed to inquire, and the House of Commons, as well as the House of Lords, on the 15th of December, determined to appoint a committee for that purpose. From this committee every Catholic was rigorously excluded. When ministers were asked the reason of this marked exclusion, the answer given was, that they desired to have upon the committee persons not pledged to any particular views and of no

marked opinions on the question of tithe and church property; and as Catholics must by their religion be opposed to the payment of tithe for the support of the Protestant Church, they were considered as partial, and therefore improper inquirers. Mr. Shiel, upon this, remarked that Mr. Lefroy, who was placed upon the committee, could scarcely be considered less pledged than the Catholics—could not be deemed, in any sense, an impartial inquirer. True, he was pledged to support tithe and the present condition of the Irish Church; but this, if the ministers were sincere, was a good ground in his case also of exclusion. To this no answer was—no answer could be made. Mr. O'Connell now gave notice that he would move to add Lord Killeen to the committee; and as petitions on the subject of tithe were daily presented, a continuous and violent altercation was kept up. An incident then occurred that significantly suggested the true line of conduct to the government with respect to Mr. O'Connell. Lord Milton, just when Mr. O'Connell was about to make the motion of which he had given notice, rose, and in most courteous phrase, prayed him to desist—stating, however, his regret at the conduct of the government in this impolitic exclusion of Catholics from the committee, and saying, that if Mr. O'Connell persisted, he should be obliged to vote with him. This took place on February 2nd, the English Reform Bill being then in committee, and the House and the country alike impatient to see the bill passed, and dreading any

appearance of dissension in the ranks of reformers. Mr. O'Connell at once yielded to Lord Milton's request, showing that he could be touched by kindness, and be docile when appealed to by a friend and in friendly phrase. Mr. Stanley's fierce and scornful demeanour had ever precisely a contrary effect. Mr. O'Connell unfortunately, out of the House, and more especially when addressing his own countrymen, was reckless in his language, and employed unsparingly violent and offensive personalities, Mr. Stanley being a very constant subject of attack. These sarcasms told upon the temper of the Irish Secretary, who gave evidence of his annoyance by constant and contemptuous allusion to them. His very general refusal to listen to any suggestion coming from Mr. O'Connell was consequently supposed, and not without reason, to spring from hurt pride and wounded vanity.

Another complaint on this matter, made by Mr. O'Connell and other Irish members, was that the scope of the committee's inquiries was unwisely narrowed to the one subject of tithes, whereas it ought to have included the church establishment itself. The ministers, as individuals, they asserted were pledged to this course; and Mr. Shiel adduced as his justification for this assertion the journals of the House of Commons, of the 6th of May, 1824, wherein was a resolution moved by Mr. Hume, and supported by Mr. Brougham, Lord John Russell, and Mr. Spring Rice, to the effect 'that it is expedient to institute an inquiry into the revenues of the church

establishment of Ireland, with a view to make a reduction,' and the pledges of the opposition ought, Mr. Shiel asserted, to be redeemed by the ministry.

The select committee thus composed, soon reported to the House some of the conclusions at which they had arrived; and before their inquiry was completed, Mr. Stanley moved the House of Commons to adopt these conclusions and found a law thereupon. The five resolutions which he thus proposed, asserted in substance—

1. That in consequence of an organized and systematic opposition to the payment of tithe, it was impossible in several parts of Ireland to collect it, and that, consequently, many clergymen of the Established Church were in great distress; and to this assertion there was an almost unanimous assent.

2. That to relieve this distress it was expedient to vote a sum not exceeding 60,000*l.*, to be issued from the Consolidated Fund. This proposal also was very generally supported.

3. That this sum should be distributed among those of the clergy who were suffering in consequence of the non-payment of tithes.

4. That for the vindication of the law, and for the repayment of the sums advanced, power should be given to the Crown, by an Act to be passed, to levy the arrears of tithe of the year 1831.

5. 'That there exists an absolute necessity for an extensive change in the present system of providing for the maintenance of the ministers of the Established

Church of Ireland; and that such a change, to be satisfactory and secure, must involve *a complete extinction of tithe*, including those belonging to lay impropriators, by commuting them for a charge upon land, or in exchange for, or investment in land.'[1]

The two last resolutions caused a violent commotion. The Irish liberal members and the English radicals generally complained of the government, because, as they asserted, the pledge given by the administration, that coercive measures should be accompanied by a redress of the grievance, was broken. 'You have,' said this party, addressing the government, 'proposed a law of coercion at once, and before inquiry has been perfected; but the law by which the mischief justly complained of is to be removed, you have indefinitely postponed. Moreover,' they asked, 'why have recourse to coercion, when both Lord Anglesey and Lord Grey have asserted that the existing laws, if vigorously enforced, are sufficient? Further,' they said, 'you are inconsistent with yourselves. You say, that tithe cannot be collected, and that for the purpose of preserving tranquillity, it must be extinguished: why, then, endeavour to enforce a tax which you have yourselves condemned; and what measure can you believe will be successful, when, with 30,000 soldiers at your command, you acknowledge that you are wholly unable now to collect it?' Much stress was also laid upon the extraordinary position of

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1832, vol. ii. p. 1579-80.

the Irish Established Church, and the insult and injury resulting from it were with great force and eloquence, more particularly by Mr. Shiel, explained and denounced, and the government and the English House of Commons were solemnly assured that peace in Ireland would be found impossible so long as this monstrous grievance existed.

On the other hand, the Conservative party insisted that tithe was a property, which Parliament could not alienate from the church: and they asserted, that if the people of Ireland were allowed to evade and resist the law, and wrest from the church the property that was undoubtedly hers, the landlords of that country would quickly find that no property was safe, as none would be respected. They therefore vehemently applauded Mr. Stanley for his vigorous conduct in vindicating the law, but gravely censured him for employing so dangerous and misleading a term as *extinction of tithe*, when, as he himself explained, nothing more was intended than a simple change in the nature of the property. 'Meaning simply commutation, you ought not to have spoken of extinction, because,' they said to the Secretary for Ireland, 'the ignorant peasantry will suppose that you intend to take the property from the church and relieve the land from this burthen.'

Mr. Stanley anxiously explained his meaning to be merely commutation of the property, and thereupon he was pressed by a question, which was destined to be followed by serious consequences for the

government to which he belonged. Mr. Perceval asked him, 'Whether it was intended that the sum to be raised in lieu of tithes was to be devoted to any other purpose than the support of the Christian religion as professed in the Protestant Church of Ireland?' Mr. Stanley observed that this inquiry was irrelevant, as the question before the committee was unconnected with the future appropriation of the tithes—the object of the resolution proposed 'being merely to alter a system which is at once oppressive to those who have to make, and insecure to those who have to receive, payments under it.' But he added, 'I am free to confess that, in my opinion, the property of the Protestant Church of Ireland ought not to be diverted to other than the Protestant Church purposes.'[1] This declaration was as a spark falling upon a magazine of powder—a violent explosion followed. Mr. Hume at once rose to protest against the doctrine of the right honourable gentleman. 'It does not appear to me,' he said, 'that you will remove the evils now complained of by merely changing the mode of collection, and still allowing such an enormous income to this church.' Mr. Stanley hereupon observed that he had spoken only his own individual opinion, not intending to pledge any one else to that opinion. Mr. Shiel recalled, with eager vehemence, to the recollection of the House, the part taken by the chief members of the cabinet on this question in

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1832, vol. ii. p. 1549.

1824, when nine of them voted for Mr. Hume's resolution that 'a select committee be appointed to inquire whether the revenues of the Church of Ireland be not more than commensurate with the duties which its ministers perform.' 'It is a late hour,' he observed, 'to enter upon the discussion of such a topic; but, late as the hour is, it is not too late to tell those nine cabinet ministers that there is a conviction firmly rooted in the minds of the people of Ireland that they are too deeply pledged to retract on the subject of the church property in Ireland. I ask, how can the Lord Chancellor, with all his Protean powers—I ask, how can the noble Paymaster of the Forces escape from the pledges which they have given, without a breach of political honour? I know that, at the present moment, the embarrassments of the government are great; but, in all probability they will be over in less than three weeks. Could they not, then, have delayed the introduction of this measure for even two or three short weeks? I thought it right to make these remarks to snatch my country from the despair in which it is likely to be reduced by the passing of the fourth of these resolutions. I yet, however, have a firm hope that when the Reform Bill is passed, the wishes and feelings of the Irish people will be attended to.' Mr. Stanley deemed this allusion to past times uncalled for, and complained. Sir Robert Inglis, who evidently desired to commit the right honourable gentleman and his colleagues to the opinion he had just expressed, pushed the question already put a little further, by inquiring whether the

Secretary for Ireland intended, after having gained the assent of the committee to his resolutions, to consider not merely the rights of the present incumbents, but also the rights of the church *in perpetuum?* To this, however, Mr. Stanley wisely declined to give an answer. Hereupon Mr. Henry Grattan, in order to force an answer from the right honourable gentleman, proposed an amendment to his resolutions, with respect to which motion Mr. Stanley, with more of justice than policy, asked the committee 'whether there were any two men in the country who could apply the same meaning to the amendment?' The sarcasm raised a laugh, and the important question as to the future appropriation of the tithe was left unanswered. The resolutions were eventually adopted, and a bill was brought in to grant 60,000*l.* for the immediate relief of the owners of the tithe in arrear, which bill was, after much opposition, carried through both Houses.

On Thursday, July 5th, Mr. Stanley submitted to the House the plan of the government, for permanently dealing with the subject of tithe in Ireland. The first bill proposed, was merely a temporary expedient, to meet a pressing necessity: the measures now brought forward were devised for the purpose of definitively settling the many vexed questions which had been so long connected with this ecclesiastical impost in Ireland. A good opportunity was thus afforded for estimating the capacity of Mr. Stanley as a practical statesman. From the plan itself, evidence

could be derived as to the extent of his ability to appreciate and cope with the difficulties which lie in the path of every English minister who meddles with the government of Ireland; and from the manner in which he framed the details of his measure, and carried it through the House of Commons, men could easily decide as to his prudence, temper, and skill in the management of a popular assembly. The result must have seriously diminished the expectations of those who, from the dashing sallies of the right honourable gentleman—from his vigour and potency as a mere party debater, had augured of him that he would in time prove a distinguished statesman. His plan was poor in conception; and while his measures were crude, ill-digested, and wholly useless, his manner was haughty and offensive. What he rashly proposed, he hastily gave up; and because unable at once, and by his imperious will, to force his ill-arranged schemes through the House, he threw the chief part of them aside, having, however, in explaining his views to the House upon that delicate and difficult subject, expressed opinions and evinced a spirit that created violent discontent, and made it impossible for him ever to tranquillize or to govern Ireland.

The plan proposed was in appearance a large one, consisting of three parts, to be embodied in three bills.

The first of these provided for the composition of tithes. 'My proposal being,' said Mr. Stanley, 'to substitute one species of property for another species of property.'

The second bill 'constituted the bishop and clergy of each diocese a corporation, for the purpose of collecting the tithe composition, or whatever should be substituted for tithe, for the benefit of the whole body, dividing it rateably among the body at large, according to the proportion to which each man should be entitled.'[1]

The third bill provided for the commutation of tithe. 'This bill will enable,' said its proposer, 'all persons being in possession of incumbered or settled estates, to raise money by mortgage upon these estates, for the purpose of buying off the incumbrance of tithe on the property; such mortgage to take precedence of all incumbrances and settlements that may be on the property.'

The two last measures were no sooner proposed, than they were withdrawn; the only purpose apparently served by the announcement of such a scheme, being to create suspicion, discontent, and anger in the minds of the liberal and Catholic members from Ireland.

To the first bill of the series, however, Mr. Stanley and the government pertinaciously adhered; and as by it the Tithe Composition Act, already in existence, was rendered permanent and compulsory, and the burthen of the tithe was imposed on the person having a permanent interest in the land, its proposers fancied that the mischiefs resulting from the collection of

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1832, vol. iv. p. 3004.

tithe would altogether cease. The landlords, however, were displeased by the obligation thus cast upon them; they who had been led by the former professions of Whig statesmen to look for a searching reform at their hands of the crying abuses of the Irish Church were grievously disappointed; and the Catholic representatives insisted that the government was eager to pass the measure, because it withdrew the public property of tithe from the control of parliament. 'The Irish Secretary,' exclaimed Mr. Shiel, 'tells the House that the church property is to remain untouched. Vain and preposterous hope! The Irish millions——Catholic, Presbyterian, Protestant—will disabuse him of his error, when that error may be lamented, but cannot be repaired. And what did he, a few days ago, utter in this House? In speaking of the evils of delaying reform, he asked whether, if the Tories when in power had adopted measures to correct the abuses of the church, Ireland would be in such a condition? Surprise was produced by this observation. The Right Honourable Member for Tamworth, in a parliamentary whisper, said across the table, 'Do you remember your speech of 1823?' Who is there among us that does not remember it? But with what consistency does the right honourable gentleman talk of reform in the church on one day, and produce such a mockery of reform as this on the other? These measures are mere imposture. They will but aggravate the evil. You will but (a new word may be fabricated for such original proceedings)

—you will but 'East Retfordize' the church.'[1] The fierce assertion by Mr. Stanley of the rights of the Irish Church was the chief cause of the opposition thus raised to his immediate proposal. Tithe composition was generally approved, but as Mr. Stanley vehemently insisted that he intended, while changing the nature of the property, to collect and retain it for the church without any diminution, they who wished for a reform of the abuses of that church were anxious to postpone the whole subject till the meeting of the reformed parliament, by whom sanguine reformers believed it would be dealt with in a manner satisfactory to the immense majority of the people of Ireland. Consequently the lateness of the period at which the measure was brought forward, the importance of the subject, and the certainty of an immediate dissolution, were all adduced as reasons for not proceeding with that fragment of a plan which the ministry now submitted to the House. Mr. Hume expressed very clearly the feelings of the liberal party generally when he said—'I do not think, although I agree in the principle of abolishing tithes altogether, and establishing a money rent on the land, that we shall act wisely, if, during the short time we are likely to continue a House of Commons, we proceed with a measure which goes to establish ecclesiastical corporations in Ireland, nay, much more, which provides that the money raised by commutation shall be taken by a

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1832, vol. iv. p. 3010.

receiver, and applied to the support of the church. . . . If this first bill be passed it will be utterly ineffectual —it will indeed only increase the difficulties under which we now labour—I cannot, therefore, support it. I tell the right honourable gentleman that he cannot pass any bill to render the collection of tithes effectual, until he has explained, in the most decided manner, what we are to do for the existing church establishment.'[1] Mr. O'Connell also took instant advantage of the declarations of the Irish Secretary with respect to the Irish Church, and asked—'What is the principle upon which the right honourable gentleman has gone in drawing up this Tithe Bill, which he now offers to the House? His grand principle is, to keep up the present Protestant church establishment in Ireland—his great determination is to do nothing which shall lessen that establishment, so monstrous and preposterous in its size.'[2] And keeping before his own mind, and before the House, the whole scheme of the Secretary, he treated the measure under discussion as a necessary part of that scheme, and tested its utility by considering it as a means to the end sought to be attained by the three bills combined. 'What the right honourable gentleman is now asking,' he said, 'is neither more nor less than that 9,600,000*l.* should be accumulated to purchase land for the benefit of the Protestant Church of Ireland. This is his chimera for the satisfaction of Ireland!—this is his dream of

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1832, vol. iv. p. 3100.
[2] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1832, vol. iv. p. 3160.

Irish tranquillity!—and, to heighten the effect, he proposes, in order that the affair may be better managed, to place it in the hands of an ecclesiastical corporation. Surely never did madman dream such a dream within the walls of Bedlam!' He then proceeded to expose what he called the injustice of the bill before the House—the errors committed in its concoction by the Secretary for Ireland, and the insuperable difficulties that would, as he declared, necessarily arise, if the bill became law. In this explanation he was supported by most of his Irish colleagues. The description they gave of the feelings of the people—of their antipathy to the impost, and of the intricacies connected with the tenure of land in that unhappy country—was indeed sufficiently appalling, and such as might well have induced any one to pause in the difficult task of legislating upon so complicated a matter. Mr. Stanley, however, insisted upon carrying his measure, and the ministerial majority enabled him to do so.

The bill, though violently opposed, went quickly through all the regular stages, and was passed by the Commons on the 6th of August. On the 9th of the same month, it was read a second time in the Lords, when, during the debate which ensued, Lord Lansdowne, who had charge of the bill, made a statement with respect to the general plan of the government wholly at variance with fact. In answer to a question put by Lord Caledon, he said—'His Majesty's government are above all things anxious that the whole of these

measures should come into immediate effect: they are by no means answerable for the delay which has arisen; and I think the noble marquis (Westmeath), if he has attended to what has been going forward in the other House, must admit that no effort was spared by the promoters of these bills to get them carried through the present session. That design was only abandoned at the instance of members of the House of Commons connected with that part of the United Kingdom. I can assure this House, that it was only in deference to the views of those honourable gentlemen, that the measure was given up.' Lord Lansdowne forgot that Mr. Stanley made a declaration on the second night of the debate which arose on the introduction of his plan, that distinctly relieved the opposition from the responsibility attendant upon arresting the passing of these measures. He said—'On a former occasion, I stated that it was my intention to lay before the House the whole as one general connected plan, which undoubtedly the government had in view; but I stated at the same time that they did not consider that it would be necessary to press all the bills through their different stages in the course of the present session. I will fairly say to the honourable gentleman (Mr. Hume), that looking to the difficulties in which this question is involved, and to the present period of the session, I do not think it would be possible to pass more than the first bill.'[1] It suited Lord Lansdowne's

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, vol. iv. p. 3100. This was said on the 10th of July.

purpose to make a contrary statement, and he made it. The fact, however, was, that the ministry were divided upon the question of the appropriation of the tithe when collected, and were by no means unanimous in their approval of the scheme by which a host of ecclesiastical corporations were to be created for the purpose of dealing with the property resulting from the composition and commutation of the tithes. The first great disruption of the Whig ministry was brought about by this difference of opinion, and the catastrophe that afterwards occurred, was foreshadowed by their early dissension on this delicate question. The bill received the royal assent on the last day of the session.

The Lord Advocate Jeffery, who had, as already stated, introduced the Scottish Reform Bill on January 19th, moved the second reading of that measure on May 21st. When explaining the proposed provisions of the Reform Bill for Scotland during the former session, on the 23rd of September, 1831, the Lord Advocate thus described its scope and purpose: 'I must announce at once,' he said, 'that its principle is, that the old system is to be regarded as utterly incurable, and not to be patched or mended, but utterly destroyed and abandoned. We cannot decimate its abuses, or cut off its vicious excesses: its essence and its principle is abuse, and there is nothing that is not vicious about it. I will then at once declare, that the principle of our bill—and I glory in being able to make the avowal—is, that no shred or

rag, no jot or tittle, of the old abominations shall remain: and why, in Heaven's name, should they, for a day, an hour, a moment!'[1] And certainly a more preposterous system of representation never existed than that which had so long prevailed in Scotland. The right of voting was, in fact, separated from the possession and property of the land, and was held for the most part by absentees, who did not own one foot of land in the places for which they chose representatives. The number of voters, besides, for the whole kingdom of Scotland did not amount to 5000, so that the entire country was, in truth, a close borough.[2] And yet this system was stoutly defended, and by Sir Robert Peel was deemed of great use, because it thus

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[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1831, Sess. 2, vol. iii. p. 2373.

[2] A ludicrous instance of a Scotch popular election was given by the Lord Advocate. 'To illustrate the system,' he said, 'I will mention the case of one election for that county (Argyle) which took place long within the memory of man. When the day of election came, there was no person to attend but one, and he was the sheriff, or returning officer. This respectable person being also a freeholder, first read the writ to the meeting as sheriff; he then constituted the meeting by calling over the roll, duly answered to his own name, and faithfully took down the *sederunt*. After this, he put the vote for the election of præses and clerk, and reported himself duly elected as præses; as such præses he read over the minutes of the last meeting and confirmed them: finally, he put the candidate in nomination, and seconded his own proposal; he then gravely took the vote by calling over the roll a second time, and having given his vote for his nominee, reported to himself that the candidate was unanimously elected; and forthwith made the return in his favour.'—*Mirror of Parliament*, vol. iii. p. 2371, (1831.)

became an antagonist force to the influence of that democracy which he considered already too potent in England.

The debates which occurred upon the proposal of the Lord Advocate, though undisturbed by the religious animosities which unfortunately broke out upon the occasion of any discussion relating to Ireland, was nevertheless marked by the same vehement prejudice, and the manifestation of the same personal interests, which had opposed themselves to all reform, whether in one country or the other. In the case of Scotland, this opposition was, however, more astonishing than in that of England or Ireland, because the Scottish system of representation—if representation it could be called—was more utterly preposterous than any which the wit of man had hitherto devised for any other people or country. So plain and palpable indeed was its mockery, that Sir Robert Peel, who was endowed with a fatal facility in the discovery and employment of plausible pretences and fallacious arguments, at once gave up the defence of the existing system in Scotland, viewing it solely with reference to Scotland, and speaking of it as a representation of her people. Its extravagant anomalies could not be denied, or in themselves defended. He therefore sought aid for its support from a consideration of the interests of the United Kingdom, and he thus stated the argument in its favour. The right honourable gentleman must have been in great straits for a reason, when he thus justified his opposition to any

change of the representation of Scotland. During the debate of September, 1831, on the motion to read the Scotch Reform Bill a second time, he said,—

'I think you are going to make a great addition to popular influence in England; first by the nature of the constituency which you are about to establish, and secondly, by the removal of those controls which have hitherto existed. Among those controls I certainly enumerated the system of Scotch representation as one. . . . I do not defend the Scotch system of representation, but I maintain that it is a check on the power and influence of the people, and that if you remove it without establishing an equivalent check, you increase to an enormous extent the purely democratic influence in this House.' [1]

Besides this strained and far-fetched conceit, employed in the shape of an argument, nothing was at any time said in opposition to the principle of the bill deserving the honour of an answer or the trouble of a record. And the opposition on the present occasion, though in words as vehement as ever, did not think it necessary to go to a division; and the bill, after a somewhat tiresome debate, was on the same evening read a second time, and committed.

Upon the introduction of this bill in 1831, the Lord Advocate anticipated an objection, founded on the anomalies of his measure, which objection he answered by saying, that to cure all the anomalies of

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1831, Sess. 2, vol. iii. p. 2386.

a system so old as ours was impossible. 'We reverence established usage, and allow prescriptive right whenever extreme absurdity and injustice would not be done. So we strike off Old Sarum and Gatton, and enfranchise Leeds and Manchester; while we leave one member to places with 2000 people, and two members to places with 4000, and give no members to many places with 8000 or 9000. If we had been called upon for the first time to frame a new system, I do not mean to contend that we should not act differently; but in the situation in which we are placed, it is necessary to draw a line, and we thought it better to cut off the extreme cases, and those which verge on a palpable absurdity, as connected with any system of representation;'[1] and this argument he now employed to resist a motion made by Sir George Murray, in committee, to increase the number of the representatives of Scotland.[2] This was a plausible proposal, and one for a Scotchman difficult and dangerous perhaps to oppose. Nevertheless, the Lord Advocate did oppose it, and justified the course he adopted by pointing to the still greater anomalies already existing and remaining untouched, and of necessity untouched, by the proposed

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[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1831, Sess. 2, vol. iii. p. 2374.

[2] The bill proposed to increase the number of Scotch members by eight, making 53 in place of 45. Sir George Murray moved: 'That the members hereafter to be returned to Parliament, by the shires of Scotland, shall always be two members for each of the larger shires enumerated in Schedule A, and one member for each of the lesser shires enumerated in Schedule B.'

Reform Bill for England.[1] The argument of the learned lord was in substance this:—All the circumstances,

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[1] The indefatigable Mr. Croker, in the debate upon the bill for the division of counties, gave some striking instances of the anomalies and injustice of the English Reform Bill, which are certainly worthy of consideration, though the Secretary of the Admiralty was hardly the proper person to raise the objection; had the bill been less faulty, he would have been still more dissatisfied and angry, if that were possible.

'I will first read,' he said, 'the ten boroughs which are to return one member each; and then the ten boroughs that are to return two members each:

One Member.	Population.	£10 Houses.
Eye	7015	330
Woodstock	7055	370
Christchurch	6087	400
Malmsbury	6136	351
Hythe	6903	537
Dartmouth	4612	422
Shaftesbury	8818	382
Clitheroe	9696	350
Morpeth	6678	446
Wallingford	7159	412
	70,359	4009

Two Members.	Population.	£10 Houses
Thetford	3462	203
Maldon	4395	260
Marlborough	4186	299
Richmond	4722	301
Sudbury	5500	301
Leominster	4300	307
Bodmin	5358	311
Totness	4108	319
Honiton	5509	318
Chippenham	5270	319
	47,310	2938

The circumstances which led to this strange selection cannot

whether of population, property, or taxation, which are adduced as reasons for increasing the representation of Scotland, apply with much greater force to Middlesex, Lancashire, and Yorkshire. Sir George Murray had quoted a saying of Louis the XIV., that there no longer existed any Pyrenees between France and Spain; and he asked, why should the Cheviots be made the boundary of two kingdoms, and England and Scotland be considered separate dominions? Turning this appeal in favour of his measure, the Lord Advocate in return required that the principle should then be strictly applied, and with great plausibility insisted that Scotland, as a whole, should not be compared with England as a whole, but that the separate counties and boroughs should be compared with certain districts of England, and thus applied his argument *ad hominem*—'Now, when one hears such an argument as that of the gallant officer, one feels naturally inclined to look at those parts of the (English) bill which, in its progress, were chiefly objected to; and in revolving this consideration in my mind, I cannot but remember the discussion which took place on the subject of the metropolitan members. Why, Sir, if we take the counties of Middlesex and Surrey, to which addition of the metropolitan members will be

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very easily be ascertained, and are perhaps not worth inquiry. We may, however, regret that the whole twenty were not included in Schedule A, into which they must eventually be put, if the disgrace of corruption and bribery is at any time to be diminished.

made, we shall find that their united population, almost to a very small fraction, is equal to the whole population of Scotland. The united population of Surrey and Middlesex is 2,324,000; the population of Scotland is 2,343,000; so that, within 20,000 souls, the population of these two counties is equal to that of Scotland. I am not ashamed of this fact, Sir; I do not blush for the poverty of my countrymen; but I do mean to say that, in point of wealth and taxation, there is a monstrous preponderance in favour of these districts in England.'[1] This was a triumphant answer to those by whom the anomalies of the existing system were not only defended, but actually selected, as the most excellent parts of that system,—parts absolutely necessary for the perfect working, which it had so long evinced. The opposition, moreover, of these very gentlemen made it difficult, if not impossible, for the government to propose and carry a more symmetrical plan; and we may, I think, without any lack of charity, agree with Mr. Hume, who declared that he did not believe the proposers and supporters of the present motion to be in earnest upon the occasion; and we may suppose that they had recourse to the proposal, because it afforded a means of annoyance to the government, and was a plausible appeal to the prejudices of their countrymen. The people of Scotland, however, were too shrewd and enlightened to be thus cajoled. They saw through the flimsy pretence, and

1 *Mirror of Parliament*, vol. iii. p. 2400.

never swerved from their vehement demands for the immediate passing of the proposed reform, which they knew was an immense improvement upon the present system, and which they perceived was as much as, under present circumstances, they could hope to attain. The committee rejected the proposal of Sir George Murray by a large majority, the numbers on the division being—

For the amendment	61
For the original motion . . .	168
Majority	107

The further progress of the bill in the Commons though pertinaciously contested by a few Scotch members, gave rise to no other incidents worthy of remark. The attention of all men was at that time given to the English Reform Bill, which was then being discussed by the peers, so that the Scotch Bill excited even less interest than is usually felt about measures connected with that part of the kingdom. The schedules of the bill gave rise to many divisions, but the numbers show the utter disregard manifested by the great majority of the House, with respect to the whole matter.[1] One remarkable alteration, however,

[1] On June 15, five divisions occurred, and the numbers were :—

Ayes	24
Noes	54
Majority	30

[Continued on next page.

occurred in the provisions of the bill, which might well have been extended to England. A property qualification for members of towns[1] had never been required in Scotland, but a provision was inserted in the new bill by which all persons were rendered ineligible to sit as members who were not possessed of heritable property to the extent of 600*l.* a year, if a county member, and of 300*l.* a year, if representing a borough. This novelty was expunged from the measure on the third reading. Lord Althorp, when proposing to make an amendment, by which the law was to be left as it was heretofore with respect to towns, and the county qualification to be fixed at 400*l.* per annum, gave significant evidence of his

Ayes	50
Noes	26
Majority	24
Ayes	73
Noes	47
Majority	26
Noes	62
Ayes	42
Majority	20
Ayes	33
Noes	67
Majority	32

[1] The qualification as regarded counties was really nominal,—the qualification of elector and candidate being the same.

own opinion as to the wisdom of property qualification generally. Having observed that the bill proposed to make the qualification similar in England and Scotland, and that he thought there might be some advantage in thus making one law for both countries, he went on to say: 'I think it would be very impolitic to enforce this very strictly. The House is aware that this has been the case in this country; for if it had been enforced very strictly, some of the brightest ornaments of this House would have been deprived of their seats; and without being guilty of invidious generalities,' (perhaps this ought to be *personalities*,) 'I might mention the names of Mr. Pitt, Mr. Sheridan, Mr. Burke, Mr. Tierney, and others. I think there is no question that if in these instances the qualification had been enforced, great injury would have been the result.'[1] But who was to know that these men, when they first entered Parliament, were to be the great lights and ornaments which they afterwards became; and if they, unknown, ought not to have been excluded, why should any other man? The truth is, the necessity of such a qualification never yet excluded permanently any man, however obnoxious or unworthy, but only serves as a means of insult or annoyance. It promotes mischievous and expensive litigation, gives rise to unworthy subterfuge, and serves to break down the distinction which ought to exist between truth and

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, vol. iii. p. 2785.

falsehood. And there was great force in the observation of Mr. Dixon, a Scottish member, who said, 'If a qualification is necessary to keep out disreputable persons, it ought to be strictly enforced in this country, (viz. England); and if it is not enforced, it ought to be withdrawn at once.' And Mr. Hume was in the right when he asserted, 'that in England it would be better to have the qualification at once done away with, than day after day to see members come into the House whom we know not to have the qualification required, any more than Mr. Fox, or Mr. Canning, and many others had, when they first entered this House. For you who are the law-makers to be the law-breakers, is setting the worst of all examples.' The feeling of the House compelled ministers to go one step in advance of their original intention; and the Lord Advocate moved to withdraw the proposal to continue the qualifications for counties. So members are eligible to sit in Parliament for a Scotch county or borough without any property qualification soever. And we may safely believe with Sir George Murray, 'that the qualification will be done away with even in England, and that the omission of it in Scotland will in future be an argument for its abolition.'

With this alteration, the bill was read a third time, and passed, on Wednesday, the 27th of June.

From the House of Lords, the measure met with little real opposition; though much heat upon the matter was manifested by certain of the Scotch peers.

The Lord Chancellor, who had charge of the bill, and moved the second reading of it, gave an amusing and very vivid description of the mockery of a representation which was about to be swept away. But nothing of moment occurred; and the measure was passed by the Lords on the 13th of July.

The financial statement for the year was submitted to the House of Commons by the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the 27th of July, and certainly gave no very flattering view of our affairs at that period. The surplus left by the Duke of Wellington's administration had entirely disappeared, and a deficit was now found in its place. The income of the year 1830—ending 5th of January, 1831—amounted to—

	£50,056,616
The expenditure was . .	47,142,943
Leaving a surplus of . .	2,913,673

The net income of the year 1831 was 46,424,440*l.* making a difference between the two years of 3,632,176*l.* This was in itself bad enough; but to make the matter still worse, the expenditure was kept up, while the income was decreasing, and a deficiency appeared amounting to the enormous sum of 698,857*l.*, the figures being as follow:—

Expenditure	£47,123,297
Income	46,424,440
Deficiency	698,857

This falling off in the revenue, the Chancellor of the Exchequer asserted, was not caused by a diminished consumption, but arose from the remission of taxes proposed by himself; 'reductions which,' he declared, when added to those of Sir Robert Peel, 'turned out larger than the income of the country could afford.' The fact was, the Chancellor of the Exchequer had hoped to obtain all the popularity that arises from the taking off taxes, without the loss of patronage and profit attending the more painful process of diminishing expenditure. By a trick of financial legerdemain, he fancied he could obtain this very desirable end, but lived to see his expectations grievously falsified.

The estimates, consequently, of the year 1832-1833 were of necessity on a diminished scale, and amounted only to the sum of 45,696,376*l.* Instead of comparing this estimate with the actual expenditure of the past year, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in order to gain the reputation of having effected a large saving, chose to compare it with the estimate for the former year, and as that estimate was larger than the expenditure, he appeared to have reduced the expenditure by the sum of 2,000,000*l.*, whereas, when compared with the actual expenditure of the year ending April, 1832—viz., 47,123,297*l.*, the proposed reduction was only 1,226,921*l.* This unworthy artifice served only to prove the straits to which the noble lord was reduced. Still, with any possible twisting of the figures, a deficit still stared the Chancellor of

the Exchequer in the face; and for this he had to account and provide. The causes of the diminution in the revenue he stated to be—1st, the cholera, which he believed would for some time continue, though he deemed the effects of this cause to be exaggerated. 2nd, the political excitement—which excitement he believed would soon end; and that therefore the effect from that cause upon the revenue, which he thought to have been very great, would end also: and the 3rd, and in his opinion the most efficient cause of the diminution, the state of the currency. This ought to be stated in the noble lord's own words: 'The House is aware,' he said, 'that during the whole of the past year the currency was undergoing a gradual contraction; the exchanges were constantly against this country, and the effect must have been to produce considerable stagnation of trade. That cause no longer exists, for the exchanges are now in favour of this country. These, which I consider the principal causes of pressure upon us, being taken away, I hope and trust that the result will not prove me to have been unreasonable in taking the revenue of last year as the foundation of my calculation.' His expectation was, he said, that the income of the coming year would be altogether 46,470,000*l.*, which, though above the expenditure of the year, would, upon the two years, still leave a deficit of 464,000*l.* Upon this statement Sir Robert Peel observed, that he took a more cheerful view than that described by many others around him. He expressed regret, however,

at the deficiency, and rather gently blamed the noble lord, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, for his experiments in taxation and in the change and remission of taxes. 'I do think,' he said, 'that it is much better to retain those taxes which already exist, than to abolish them, and meet the demands of the country by imposing fresh taxes.'[1] As was to be expected, he attributed the chief falling off in the revenue to the political excitement which had continued throughout the year, and sought by implication to cast the blame of creating such excitement upon the administration. This was, however, not a just charge. The nation desired the change which the ministers had proposed, and the excitement which followed resulted from the dogged opposition to the Reform Bill which Sir Robert Peel himself headed. If the excitement and its consequences were to be imputed as blame to any party, Sir Robert Peel and his friends ought assuredly to have borne it.

One observation made by him in this debate deserves to be recorded. A prophecy more completely falsified by the event, perhaps was never uttered.

'Political excitement,' he said, 'may abate in England as well as in Ireland; but I tell the noble lord fairly that I do not think the changes which have been made in the constitution of this House will be calculated to produce an increase in the revenue; on the contrary, I think that the result of those changes

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1832, vol. iv. p. 3431.

will be, that apprehensions will prevail for the security of property, apprehensions which are likely to affect considerably the revenue, and the productive powers of the country, and that the political excitement will continue as rife, and the political unions as flourishing, as ever.'

A few weeks after this, the political unions ceased in reality to exist, and the respect for property has never been greater than since the passing of the Reform Bill.

The House acquiesced in the anticipations of the Chancellor of the Exchequer—his budget was accepted, and the supplies he desired voted almost without opposition.

The whole people were now anxious for the end of the session. The reform bills were passed, and the different constituencies were eager to exercise the powers which the new acts conferred. The first elections under the new systems would be, everybody saw, of necessity, a matter of time and difficulty, and all parties were desirous of proceeding immediately to the registration which was to precede the coming general election. No one doubted but that the existing parliament would be dissolved immediately after the prorogation, and that a new one would be called. The consequence was, that in every town now having the right to return a member, the election had in reality commenced, and every day's continuance of the session served but to prolong the vehement contests that, under any circumstances, were sure to be most

inconveniently prolonged. So soon, therefore, as the routine business of the session was concluded, the ministers determined to bring the session to a close, and on the 16th of August the king in person prorogued the parliament.

In the speech from the throne there were some significant passages. After alluding to the passing of the great measure of parliamentary reform, the king was made to observe upon the state of Ireland, and the bill lately passed for the collection of tithes in that country—speaking of it as 'the foundation of a new system, to the completion of which the attention of parliament, when it again assembles, will of course be directed. To this necessary work my best assistance will be given, by enforcing the execution of the laws and by promoting the prosperity of a country blessed by divine Providence with so many natural advantages. As conducive to this object, I must express the satisfaction which I have felt at the measures adopted for extending generally to my people in that kingdom the benefits of education.'

His Majesty then spoke of the friendly assurances which he received from all foreign powers, but lamented that as yet the differences between Holland and Belgium were not arranged, nor the contest in Portugal between the princes of the house of Braganza yet concluded. He declared, nevertheless, that he still 'looked with confidence, through the intimate union which existed between himself and allies, to the preservation of the general peace.'

The last paragraph of the speech spoke the personal feelings and fears of the king, and showed that his dread of political unions and the possible effects of the reform act was still undiminished. 'I recommend to you,' he said, 'during the recess the most careful attention to the public peace, and to the maintenance of the authority of the law in your respective counties. I trust that the advantages enjoyed by all my subjects under our free constitution, will be duly appreciated and cherished; that relief from any real causes of complaint will be sought only through legitimate channels; that all irregular and illegal proceedings will be discountenanced and resisted, and that the establishment of tranquillity and order will prove that the measures which I have sanctioned have not been fruitless in promoting the security of the state and the content and welfare of my people.' And thus, in ill-concealed alarm, William IV. put an end to the last session of the old and unreformed parliament.

That little had yet been done by the Whig administration, beyond passing the great measure by which the constitution of the House of Commons was remodeled, can hardly be fairly brought as a charge against them. There was little leisure for the consideration of any subject not connected with this absorbing topic, and it was wise in the administration, if they really intended subsequently to effect serious reforms in the government of the country, to devote their whole time and energy to the acquisition of such a

power in parliament as would enable them, without difficulty, to effect that purpose, and thereby to satisfy the expectations of the people. The enthusiasm of the people gave them strength, even in an unreformed House of Commons, to carry their one great measure of reform; but this enthusiasm would not have sufficed in matters of smaller import. What they needed was a steady large majority which should be docile in their hands, not upon compulsion, but willingly; and until they had obtained this, they were acting prudently in abstaining as much as possible from all large administrative reforms. Their first business was to obtain an effective instrument, and, when this was attained, then to set earnestly to work upon the many reforms which an expectant people now demanded. The important question to be decided by the coming elections was, to what extent had they succeeded in this project by passing the measure which had just become law. The administration fancied that the elections that were about to take place would be a fair test of the change that had been effected in the constitution, and they seem to lay wholly out of account that extraordinary enthusiasm under the influence of which the public were now acting, and they believed that the influence which they, the administration, at this time undoubtedly possessed, was the result not of a peculiar and passionate feeling of gratitude on the part of the people, but was the necessary effect of the provisions of the bill itself, which effect would be lasting, no matter how fleeting and evanescent might be

the friendly dispositions of the people towards themselves. This belief we shall hereafter see inducing them to commit great mistakes—we shall quickly behold them terrified by their own success, and in an agony of alarm lest a revolutionary spirit should prevail among the people, and that all the old forms and powers of our constitution should be swept away, and a republic erected in its stead. Had they, however, understood their own work—had they scanned accurately the machinery they had themselves framed, they would have perceived that their old opponents were far from being overthrown, and that so soon as the fervour of the time had passed away, all the old influences would resume their sway, and the party which most faithfully represented the aristocratic principles of our constitution would again resume its old ascendancy. For themselves the Whigs misconceived the part they were playing—they were also ignorant of the feelings of the nation at large, and underrated their intelligence. We can hardly be surprised that the conduct which they afterwards pursued rapidly destroyed their great popularity, and again subjected them to the humiliation of defeat and the pain of exclusion from power.

The Whigs have ever been an exclusive and aristocratic faction, though at times employing democratic principles and phrases as weapons of offence against their opponents. It is the fashion of the writers who advocate their cause, and eulogize their party, to describe them as representing the principle of advance and

change, in the hope of improvement, which must be ever acting with a people who are themselves continually improving; but this assumption is not justified by experience. The Whigs employ the phrases of liberality upon compulsion. They are liberal, because they need some means of exciting the nation. When out of office they are demagogues; in power they become exclusive oligarchs. In the one case and the other, they pursue without scruple what they believe to be their party interest.[1]

The strength of the administration was derived from the gratitude of the people, and in some measure from the new constitution of the House of Commons. But with respect to both sources of their power, they committed great mistakes, and formed most erroneous conclusions; and these errors, combined with the other circumstances which tended to weaken their power and influence, eventually destroyed the administration of Lord Grey.

The gratitude of the people arose from the belief very generally entertained that Lord Grey and his friends were sincerely desirous of so changing the character of the House of Commons as to make it an efficient and accurate representation of the intelligence and the wants of the nation; and that in their endea-

[1] This may be deemed a prejudiced description—Mr. Macaulay, however, can hardly be considered an unfriendly witness. Let any one read his description of the Whigs and their opponents during the reigns of the first Georges, and he will find my statement borne out to the letter.

vours to effect this reform, they had incurred great risks as a political party, and encountered much obloquy and trouble. Such being the opinion respecting them entertained by the nation very generally, the confidence awarded them was almost unbounded; so that on the meeting of the first reformed parliament in 1833, an overwhelming majority was found ready to support every proposal emanating from what the nation believed a really honest administration, sincerely bent upon bringing about every necessary and well-considered change. The people were slow to give up this confidence in their favourite leaders, or the belief upon which it was founded—so that even at the present hour the lingering remains of this once fervent and predominant feeling still influence the public opinion with respect to the Whig successors of Lord Grey.

The ministry, however, were terrified by their own popularity. They fancied that there was about to arise a most formidable radical party, the grand purpose of whose endeavours would be to subvert the monarchy, and all that was respectable in the state and in society, and to establish in its place a democratic republic, from which nobility, and all distinctions of rank and property were to be rigorously excluded. This notion got into, or rather was put into the mind of the king; and no day passed without eager declarations by him of anxiety, not to say terror, as to the fatal consequences about to result from the unwise concessions to popular power made

in the Reform Bill. He scanned the merits and character of every candidate at every election, expressing the most vehement satisfaction when any proof was afforded to him of the probable success of the Ministerial, or even Tory, over what he was pleased to call the vulgar and wicked Radical candidate. The king and his ministers were almost equally frightened, and the evidence of their alarm, as afforded by the letters of the monarch and his advisers, is a ludicrous instance of the exaggerations and extravagance resulting from a blind and unreasoning terror. The clever persons who were behind, and pulled the strings, must have been amused and delighted by the scenes which they beheld, and in a great degree produced. The reactionary policy which this error brought about was the chief cause of the subsequent success of the Conservative party.

The alarm existing in the mind of the king did by no means incline him to look favourably upon the ministry, which he believed had forced the Reform Act upon him. He nevertheless was prepared to bide his time, and wait until the waning popularity of his now too formidable advisers might permit him to dismiss them at once, and, as he hoped, for ever. At the present moment no such course was possible. In the House of Commons it was evident, from the feeling of the country generally, that they would be almost without opponents; and so long as their majority in that House remained, the king and his intimate friends well knew that any attempt to get rid of these

obnoxious ministers would but increase their power, and strengthen their popularity. But neither the king nor the administration seemed to understand how intimately the power of the ministry depended upon their popularity. They both of them overrated the effect of the changes wrought by the Reform Act, and attached too little importance to the old influences by which the House of Commons was formerly returned. The king believed that the democratic element was about to be predominant. The ministers shared certainly to some extent in this opinion, but they fancied also that the majority of the constituencies, as now remodelled, would be hereafter Whig; they thought, in fact, that they had completely annihilated the power of their old opponents, the Tories; and that, although a somewhat disagreeable, not to say dangerous influence, had been acquired by the Radicals, this democratic influence would be effectually controlled by the overwhelming numbers of Whig adherents to be hereafter of necessity returned. This belief was founded upon the altered relation between the county and the borough representation, and upon the mode in which the borough influence of the Whig party had been preserved in the schedules of the Reform Bill. The Reform Act had very largely increased the numbers of the county members, and had materially diminished those of the Tory nomination and rotten boroughs. The small boroughs had in a great measure been in the power of the Tory party; and the great Whig families, as powerful

landed proprietors, believed that, by destroying the small boroughs of their opponents, by preserving in a great measure their own, and by increasing the county representation, they had made and would continue themselves irresistible. Herein they erred. Too many small boroughs not subject to Whig influence still remained, and the landed interest has generally sided with their opponents. The chief power of the Whig party has been derived, since the passing of the Reform Act, from those large manufacturing constituencies which they had almost reluctantly created, and which they feared were about to commence a career of revolutionary violence. As an aristocratic party, playing the part of patriots, the power of the Whigs could only be supported by the enthusiasm of the people. The ordinary working of a constitution in which an aristocracy is really predominant, of necessity brings into office those who openly profess to favour exclusive and aristocratic interests. They who profess popular principles—who, though themselves members of the dominant class, yet call themselves the friends of the people—can only hope to obtain power through popular excitement, and the enthusiasm which it confers can alone maintain their superiority. We shall find the Whigs for a time forgetting this necessary condition of their peculiar position, and fancying that they could dispense with the popular aid, and yet retain their present predominant influence. To forego their popular character altogether, and openly adopt the language as well as

the principles of their opponents was impossible, simply because the ground they might desire thus to take was occupied by more powerful rivals. Sir Robert Peel and the Duke of Wellington were at this time considered the proper and natural leaders of the great Tory or Conservative party; and no man knew better than Sir Robert Peel how to employ, for his own ends, the current phrases of party debate. If the now triumphant Whigs had at once dropped their character of popular leaders, they must have become subordinate to their old opponents, and have submitted to be followers when they desired to command.

Viewed without reference to the peculiar position of parties, the Reform Act would appear to be an exceedingly imperfect measure of legislation. Professing to cure an anomalous system, it is itself full of anomalies; proposing to remedy injustice, it leaves untouched many instances of most glaring wrong. It is without anything that deserves the name of a plan, proceeds upon no definite or accurate rule, and leaves inequalities little inferior to those which it really destroyed. The machinery, too, which it introduced, though a great improvement, was far from faultless—far from what the theoretical writers on government had proposed, or what experience had already discovered and sanctioned. Looked upon, then, simply as a work of legislation, to be judged by scientific rules, this celebrated act must be deemed confused, cumbrous, unequal, and inefficient.

The first defect which it contained, was the narrow

suffrage it adopted. Intelligent, and extensive, and deserving classes, are by its provisions left wholly unrepresented, and a feeling of wrong done, and injustice suffered, was thus left to rankle in the minds of thousands, who might easily and safely have been intrusted with the suffrage. This one defect alone, was sufficient to make the Reform Act a provisional measure—a stepping-stone only to future change—to continue the popular desire for organic alterations in our system of government, and to divert the public attention from those specific administrative improvements, without which, in fact, good government cannot be effected.

Another, and not less important blemish, was the unequal distribution of the representation. The injustice here is so glaring and palpable, that discontent with respect to it was sure to be kept alive. It requires no ingenuity to make apparent the monstrous departure from all fairness and equality, by a law which gives to Manchester and Marylebone the same number of members as to Lymington and Lewes—which enables Salford to return only one member, while Lymington and Lewes still retain the power of sending two representatives[1] to parliament. Upon the question of the suffrage, honest and intelligent reasoners may conscientiously differ; but there can hardly be two

[1] Salford, at the last election of 1847, contained 2602 electors; yet Salford returns but one member. Lymington, with 324 electors, returns two. Dewsbury, with a population of 71,768, returns none.

opinions upon the gross injustice done by these extravagant discrepancies.

These inequalities, moreover, were supposed to be retained in order to give to a favoured class a predominance in the legislature—that class being the possessors of land—and thus a most injurious rivalry was created and maintained between what are termed the agricultural and manufacturing interests. The effect of the inequality complained of, was not to give *property*, as distinguished from population, a predominance, but to confer it on one species of property, namely, land. Manchester, for example, not only in the numbers of its voters, but in their wealth also, was, and is, superior to some fifty small boroughs united;[1] but the fifty boroughs are all exponents of the feelings of those who are landed proprietors, and are permitted to return to parliament one hundred members, while Manchester sends but two. If, then, for the moment, we concede that intelligence may be measured by wealth; and if we allow, that poverty and ignorance are allied—and on this ground permit the suffrage to be given to those only endowed with a certain share of affluence—we may still ask why wealth, when

[1] The Tower Hamlets contain 19,361 electors, returning two members. A table in the January number of the *Westminster Review* gives a list of fifty-three constituencies sending seventy-six members to parliament, but containing only 6362 electors. See page 23 of that number. The various tables set forth in this very elaborate and instructive paper strikingly illustrate the many and glaring anomalies of the Reform Act.

invested in land, should possess this overwhelming influence in the councils of the nation? And until a satisfactory answer is given to this question, we shall not fail to hear complaints of the system which continues anomalies so startling and so palpable.

There is, besides, an evil connected with this unequal distribution of the representation, which is every day increasing, and exciting the constantly increasing indignation of every honest man among us; and that is the gross *corruption*, by this means made a necessary incident of the working of our representative system. We cannot, indeed, say, that the large constituencies are free from the taint of bribery and corruption; but we may assert that no small constituency can long remain so. The larger the numbers, the more difficult is the business of corruption; detection is more easy, and the motive therefore to commit the offence becomes weaker. The system so long practised in St. Alban's with impunity would be found impossible in Manchester or Sheffield.[1] But so long as the small constituencies are preserved, we shall in vain look for anything deserving the name of purity of election.

Inequality does not result from this difference in the various borough constituencies alone. The immense preponderance of the county members contributes to the same result, and has been retained for the same

[1] In opposition to this assertion, the elections in London and Liverpool may be cited. In both, however, an old system has been continued, and that system I am convinced will, by exciting further indignation, in the end cure itself.

reason, namely, to give to the proprietors of land supremacy in the House of Commons. Against this supremacy, however, the intelligence of the country every year more strongly protests; and in order to break down the exclusive dominion of the class so long predominant amongst us, we shall quickly find further changes demanded by the representatives of the large and powerful constituencies created by the Reform Act. The two most effective means to this end, however, will be found to be education and the ballot. So soon as that portion of the population who employ their capital and their labour in agriculture are properly instructed, they will learn that their interests are the same as those of all other labourers and capitalists; and they will then desire to vote, not in accordance with the will and in obedience to the commands of those who are proprietors of the soil, but as their own feelings dictate; and to this end they will seek, as they will for their due protection need, the safeguard of the ballot. Thus, then, when a new Reform Bill shall be proposed, it, to be effective, must extend the suffrage, render more equal the several constituencies, and make each separate one a numerous body; must break down in a great degree, if not entirely, the distinction between county and borough representatives—simplify the title to a vote, and the mode of registration—establish the ballot, and lessen the expense of elections.

The administration of Lord Grey, however, is not to be blamed because all this was not accomplished. Even had they desired so extensive a

change, they would have been unable to effect it. The first bill, indeed, which they proposed, was in many respects superior to that which they ultimately carried, and there seems to have been no sufficient reason alleged for the changes which they themselves proposed. The excitement which enabled them to carry their more faulty plan would have been sufficient to pass their original measure, and we may therefore, perhaps, reproach them for want of firmness in not adhering to their first proposal. Yet, when we remember the great difficulties they had to encounter, the mighty interests they of necessity offended; when we remember the reluctance of the king, the undisguised hostility of the House of Lords, the prejudices of their own class, and even of themselves, we must acknowledge that the reform they proposed was large and liberal in its conception, was, all things considered, wisely framed, and with great judgment and courage carried through the separate stages needed to confer on it the character of a law. Mistakes doubtless were committed both in framing the measure and in carrying it, and faults might be pointed out that were something more than mistakes.[1] We may, nevertheless, fairly say, that few are the instances in the history of mankind,

[1] The legerdemain practised in the constantly changing arrangement of the schedules was the chief blot in the whole proceeding. Yet even here something may be said for the administration. Had they been severely honest in this matter, their own party would have deserted them.

in which so great a constitutional change has been brought about with so little of material or moral injury to the people, for whom, and by whom, the change was effected. That the Whigs, as a party, sought more than their own party advantage, I see no reason to believe. That they both overrated and underrated the effect of their own measure, their subsequent conduct, I think, proves. They overrated it in supposing, that they had really annihilated the political power of their opponents, and firmly established their own supremacy; they overrated it, also, in fancying that they had given a dangerous power to what they called alternately a republican and democratic party. They underrated the effect of the new Act, and mistook its influence altogether, when they supposed that the coming contests in the House of Commons were to be between themselves, representing monarchy, aristocracy, wealth and order, on the one hand, and a small, but fierce and active body of republicans and anarchists on the other. The Reform Act gave no such supremacy to themselves, it created no such violent and republican party. The change really effected by it, however, though not what its authors believed, was immense, and destined to affect materially the conduct of parliament for all future time. The battle in the House of Commons has been since the Reform Act, not between those having property and those having none, but between the possessors of different kinds of property — between the landed proprietors, on the one hand,

and possessors of manufacturing capital, on the other.

The new interests of manufacture, which within the last half-century have risen into importance, now for the first time found a voice, and became a power in the House of Commons; and the large and intelligent constituencies which the Reform Act called into existence have, in reality, introduced a totally new spirit, and brought influences to bear upon the representatives of the Commons hitherto unfelt, if not unknown. The full effect of these influences has not yet been seen, but he must indeed be an inattentive observer who does not perceive that the scope of our legislation is now widely different from that which preceded the Reform Act of 1832. The two great aristocratic parties have not yet, indeed, ceased to be the rulers of the state, but their conduct has been greatly modified in consequence of that measure. Opinions of large classes out of doors, hitherto almost unregarded, have, since the passing of that bill, commanded earnest attention, and a party, significantly termed the Manchester school, now for the first time appears in the legislature—a party destined to increase every day in importance, and eventually to share in the actual management of the state with those aristocratic factions which hitherto have enjoyed a monopoly of dominion. Unaccustomed, however, to take part in the business of government, the representatives of the manufacturing classes came at first to parliament to act as the followers of the existing

administration — their whole weight and influence were enthusiastically employed to support and increase its power; and more docile and humble followers never gave themselves up to the guidance of a minister. Time, however, was sure to bring the real interests of the class they represented into play, and the minister who wished to retain their support was compelled to pay an ever increasing attention to the wants, wishes, aye, and prejudices of these new and important retainers. The Whigs were not long in discovering their grievous mistake as to their own hoped-for supremacy, and found themselves compelled again to adopt the character of a warmly liberal party, and to lean for support upon the new section of politicians which their own measure had brought into the House of Commons. Indeed, the heads both of the Whig and the Tory parties have, since that time, alike felt and yielded to the influence of this new power in the state.

While the king was thus hostile, and watching his opportunity--while the vast majority of the English and Scotch people were thus enthusiastically in favour of the government, an overwhelming majority of the House of Lords and the whole Catholic population of Ireland were their vehement opponents. The Tory party in the country generally were stunned by the blow inflicted by the Reform Act, and in the elections which immediately followed the passing of that measure, were unable with any effect to make head against the popular enthusiasm. In the House of

Commons, therefore, they were really in an insignificant minority, and for the time Sir Robert Peel was almost without a following. In the House of Lords, however, the strength of the Tory party was as predominant as ever, while the feeling of hostility against the administration daily grew stronger. That party had therefore not only the desire, but the power to thwart the ministers in every project not supported and enforced by the imperious voice of the nation; and this obstructive influence grew more efficient with every decline in the popularity of the Whigs—was quickly enabled to struggle with effect against them, and at last to supplant their administration.

The cloud fraught with this fatal influence upon the Whig fortunes, arose in Ireland. The so-called Reform Bill for Ireland was framed in a manner certain to offend the liberal party of that country, and at the same time to confer on Mr. O'Connell great powers of annoyance. The Tithe Bill excited the fierce anger of the whole Catholic population, and thus enabled Mr. O'Connell to strengthen his political position, by enlisting on his side all the unreasoning and bitter animosity which invariably results from religious quarrels. If in place of the unjust measure called the Irish Reform Act, a really wise bill had been proposed, the people of that country would have believed that the ministry were seriously desirous of removing all the grievances which for so long a period had embittered the existence of the Irish nation, and they would have been ready to put faith in all the

ministerial professions of sympathy and kindness. Now, however, every profession was disbelieved—every proposal was looked upon with suspicion—and thus, from one end to the other of Ireland, excitement almost amounting to rebellion, was to be found among all classes of her people.

The Irish, however, were taught by Mr. O'Connell to expect a great change in the policy of England, in consequence of the change produced by the Reform Bill—expectation therefore was rife among them—while very bitter feelings against the ministry, and more especially against Mr. Stanley, were openly avowed at every election and every meeting that occurred. The great grievance of the Established Church gave strength to every complaint of injustice—increased the acrimony of every accusation—sharpened every sarcasm, and embittered every feeling hostile to the existing system of government, and to those by whom it was defended. The existence of this portentous establishment, in all its rampart prodigality of wrong, was soon found to be incompatible with the maintenance of a just and wise government in Ireland.

Abroad everywhere, as regarded England, there was peace. In France, the Orleans dynasty was firmly seated on the throne, and a constitutional monarchy seemed at length definitively established. The new monarch, Louis Philippe, enjoyed an opportunity for promoting the welfare of his people such as has seldom been conceded by fortune to any one man. Washington, indeed, had an equally glorious oppor-

tunity afforded to him; and gloriously he fulfilled the great duty thus by destiny cast upon him. Time alone could determine whether, for the welfare of mankind, fortune had once more chosen an instrument worthy of the occasion: at present, all promised happiness and quiet, and France and England were knit together by the strong bonds of sympathy and interest.

The clouds that lowered over Belgium and Portugal, though threatening, were rendered innocuous by the good will existing between England and France; and the peace of Europe was maintained by the co-operation of those who had once been deemed the everlasting foes of each other.

This real power of the administration and these fair prospects were, however, endangered by internal dissensions in the ministry itself. Great difference of opinion existed in the cabinet on the subject of the government of Ireland, and at one time, and before the reformed parliament met, had nearly caused the sudden dissolution of the ministry of Lord Grey. The Chancellor was anxious not only to send Lord Wellesley as lord lieutenant, to supersede Lord Anglesey, but also to introduce measures for the government of Ireland not agreeable to Mr. Stanley. Not being able to persuade Lord Grey to adopt this strong course of proceeding—although he (the premier) admitted that it was necessary, the Chancellor suddenly, in December, expressed a determination to resign. This resolution alarmed Lord Grey, who at once stated that if the Chancellor retired, he should himself retire

also, and consider himself, to use his own language, 'politically dead.' The language which he had used in 1822, which he had again employed in 1830, upon the formation of his ministry, he now repeated—solemnly declaring, that without the aid of the Chancellor he could not hope to carry on the government. 'It is impossible,' he said, addressing the Chancellor, 'that you could retire without the administration being dissolved—upon this my determination would be as firm as yours: there is little chance of my being able to go on as it is, certainly none that I can do so for any long period; but on such an event I must abandon public life at once and for ever.' 'All that I entreat you,' he at another time said, with mournful earnestness, 'is that we may go on together as long as we can, and when the moment comes when any decisive measure must be taken, I feel confident that there will be no separation between you and me. Such an event, indeed, would be personally so painful to me, and so decisive as to my public utility, that from that moment I should consider myself as politically dead.' And he added, 'If such a breach, therefore, should now take place, I must repeat, as my solemn and unalterable resolution, that I could not continue in the administration a single hour.' Such a statement, so made, could not fail to prevail with the Chancellor. The idea of immediate resignation was abandoned, and the cabinet, apparently cordially united, determined to meet the parliament about to

be returned, according to the provisions of the great measure which they had successfully carried. The existing parliament was dissolved on the 3rd of December,—the writs for the election of the new one being returnable on the 29th of January, 1833.

END OF VOL. II.

APPENDIX.

14 *March*, 1831.

A

BILL

To amend the Representation of the People in *England* and *Wales*.

[Note.—The Words printed in *Italics* are proposed to be inserted in the Committee.]

WHEREAS it is expedient to take effectual measures for correcting divers abuses that have long prevailed in the choice of members to serve in the Commons House of Parliament, to diminish the expense of elections, to deprive many inconsiderable places of the right of returning members, to grant such privilege to large, populous, and wealthy towns, to increase the number of knights of the shire, and to extend the elective franchise to many of his Majesty's subjects who have not heretofore enjoyed the same; Be it enacted, by the King's most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, that the boroughs enumerated in Schedule A. to this act annexed, shall cease, after the end of this present

Preamble.

Boroughs to cease to send Members to Parliament.

parliament, to return members to serve in parliament, and that no writ or precept shall be issued or sent to any of the said boroughs to return members to serve in any future parliament.

Boroughs to return one Member only.

And be enacted, that the boroughs enumerated in Schedule B. to this act annexed, shall, after the end of this present parliament, return one member, and no more, to serve in parliament for each of the said boroughs.

Towns hereafter to return two Members and one Member respectively.

And be it enacted, that after the end of this present parliament, the towns enumerated and described in Schedule C. to this act annexed, shall each return *two* members to serve in parliament; and that the towns enumerated in Schedule D. to this act annexed, shall each return one member to serve in parliament.

Weymouth and Melcombe Regis to return two Members jointly.

And be it enacted, that the towns of Weymouth and Melcombe Regis shall for the purposes of this act be taken as one town, and shall, after the end of this present parliament, return only *two* members to serve in parliament.

Portsmouth, Rochester, and Kingston to return two Members jointly with other places.

And be it enacted, that each of the towns of Portsmouth, Rochester, and Kingston-upon-Hull shall, after the end of this present parliament, return *two* members to serve in parliament, jointly with the other places respectively, as described in Schedule E. to this act annexed.

Places to have a share in elections, and mode of voting therein.

And be it enacted, that after the end of this present parliament, each of the places named in Schedule F. to this act annexed, shall have a share in the election of burgesses to serve in parliament, for the shire, town, or borough to which such place is annexed in the said Schedule F.; and that every person having the right of voting in any of the said places previously to the passing of this act, or acquiring such right by virtue of

this act, shall and may give his vote in respect thereof at the place in which he resides, before the mayor or other chief officer of the place, who shall transmit the poll taken before him to the returning officer of the shire, town, or borough, to which such place may be joined for the purposes of election.

No right of voting in respect of Criccieth.

And be it enacted, that no person shall, after the end of this present parliament, have the right of voting at the election of members to serve at the town of Carnarvon, in respect of any supposed right of voting in the place called Criccieth.

Swansea, Laugharne, Neath, Aberaven and Ken Fig to form henceforward one Borough, and none of the Electors therein to vote for Members for Cardiff.

And be it enacted, that the towns of Swansea, Laugharne, Neath, Aberaven, and Ken Fig, shall, after the end of this present parliament, for the purposes of this act, be taken as one borough, and shall return one member to serve in parliament; and no person by reason of any right accruing in any of the places last named shall have any vote in the election of members for the borough of Cardiff; and that the votes shall in such elections be taken at the town or place within which the persons having the right of voting shall severally reside, by the mayor or other municipal officer of such town or place, who shall transmit the poll taken before him to the Portreeve of Swansea, who shall be the returning officer for the said borough.

Description of the Returning Officers.

And be it enacted, that the persons described in the column of the said several Schedules (C. D. and E.) shall be the persons to whom all writs and precepts shall after the end of this present parliament, be directed, and shall be the returning officers for the elections of members to serve in parliament for the said towns and places.

No person to vote in County Elections for a

And be it enacted, that no person shall be entitled to vote at the election of a knight of the shire to serve

house having a vote in a Borough.

in any future parliament, in respect of any house by reason of the occupation whereof he or any other person shall be entitled to vote for any city or borough.

Right of votes in Counties.

And be it enacted, that from and after the end of this present parliament, every male person of full age and not subject to any legal incapacity, seised of and in any lands or tenements for an estate for life, or for any larger estate of at least the yearly value of *ten pounds* above reprises, holden by copy of court roll of the lord or lady of any manor, or by any customary tenure, and every person holding lands or tenements by lease for any term not less than years, whereon a yearly rent of not less than *fifty pounds* shall be reserved, shall have a right to vote in the election of knights of the shire in all future Parliaments; provided that no leaseholder shall enjoy such right by virtue of any lease renewable every year, or which shall have been renewed within *two* years preceding the registration to be made in manner hereinafter directed: Provided always, that nothing herein contained shall take away or in any manner affect the right of voting for knights of the shire, at present enjoyed by any person, and which may hereafter accrue to any person, according to the laws now in force, in respect of freehold property, rent-charges, annuities, or any other right of voting now by law enjoyed in relation to the election of knights of the shire.

Freeholders, &c. in Towns which are Counties of themselves to vote in adjoining Counties.

And be it enacted, that after the end of this present parliament, every person owning or holding any lands or tenements situate within cities or towns being counties of themselves, described in Schedule G. to this act annexed (which lands or tenements would, if situated in a county not being a city or town which is a county of itself, entitle the owner or holder thereof to vote,)

shall be entitled to vote at any election for the knights of the shire named in the said Schedule G. respectively.

No person to vote for Members unless he shall have been in possession before Registration.

Provided also, and be it hereby enacted, that no person shall vote for any member to serve in any future parliament in respect of the ownership or possession of any lands or tenements, unless he shall have been seised or possessed thereof for the space of *thirty* days at least before the registration (to be made in manner hereinafter directed) last before the election at which he shall claim to vote.

Counties which shall return four Knights of the Shire each.

And be it enacted, that each of the counties enumerated in Schedule H. to this act annexed, to be divided in manner hereinafter particularly directed, shall in like manner choose and return *four* knights of the shire instead of two, to serve in all future parliaments for the same respectively.

Six Knights of the Shire for Yorkshire, two for each Riding.

And be it enacted, that in all future parliaments there shall be *six* knights of the shire instead of four, to serve for the county of York, that is to say, *two* members for each of the three Ridings of the said county, to be elected in such manner and by the same classes and descriptions of voters, and in respect of the same several rights of voting as if each of the three Ridings were a county of itself.

Four Knights of the Shire for Lincolnshire, two for the Parts of Lindsey, two for Holland and Kesteven.

And be it enacted, that in all future parliaments there shall be *four* knights of the shire instead of two, to serve for the county of Lincoln, that is to say, *two* for the parts of Lindsey in the said county, and two for the parts of Holland and the parts of Kesteven in the same county; and that such *four* members shall be chosen in the same manner and by the same classes and descriptions of voters, and in respect of the same several rights of voting as if the said parts of Lindsey

were a separate county, and the said parts of Holland and Kesteven together were also a separate county.

Isle of Wight severed from Hampshire, to return a Member.

And be it enacted, that in like manner all persons now having or who would by virtue of this act acquire the right of voting in elections for knights of the shire for the county of Southampton, by reason of the ownership or possession of any lands or tenements situate within the Isle of Wight, shall in all future parliaments cease to vote in such election for the county at large, in respect of such ownership or possession, and shall be entitled to choose one member to serve for the Isle of Wight, and that all elections for the same shall be holden at the town of Newport in the Isle of Wight.

Committee to divide Counties.

And be it enacted, that a committee of the Lords of his Majesty's most honourable Privy Council, to be selected and named by his Majesty under his royal sign manual, shall within *three* months of the passing of this act, inquire into and determine in what manner the said counties enumerated in Schedule H. to this act annexed, shall thereafter be divided, for the election of knights of the shire to serve in all future parliaments; and shall have the power of uniting and incorporating with any county, or any division of a county to be by them made (for the purposes of election only) any outlying portions of any other county which may be locally situate within the former, and shall make a report to his Majesty in Council; and it shall be lawful for his Majesty to issue his royal proclamation, making known the determination and report of the said committee, and such reports shall forthwith be laid before both Houses of Parliament.

Committee to determine the places of Election.

And be it enacted, that the said committee shall also in their said report determine at what places re-

spectively all elections of knights of the shire to serve in all future parliaments for the respective divisions of the said counties, when so divided, shall be holden.

Freeholders, &c. in separate Divisions to vote as if they were Counties.

And be it enacted, that after such division and incorporation of the said counties shall have been proclaimed as hereinbefore mentioned, any person claiming and having the right to vote, after the end of this present parliament, for a knight of the shire to serve in parliament, shall vote only for that division of the said county in which the property in respect of which he claims to vote shall be situate.

Committee to declare boundaries of Cities and Boroughs.

And be it enacted, that another committee of his Majesty's most honourable Privy Council, to be named by his Majesty under his sign manual, shall inquire into and determine the limits and boundaries of all the cities and boroughs in England and Wales having the right of sending members to parliament, and shall have power to annex unto and incorporate with any city or borough, any parish or township locally situated within such city or borough or thereto adjoining, or any outlying portion of any parish or township which may happen to be locally situate beyond the limits of such city or borough respectively, and shall on or before the * next, after the passing of this act, lay before his Majesty in council a report of such their determination; and it shall be lawful for his Majesty to issue his royal proclamation, making known the said determination and report of the said committee, from the date of which proclamation such cities and boroughs shall be and remain bounded and limited, annexed and incorporated respectively according to such determination as aforesaid; and the said report shall forthwith be laid before both Houses of Parliament.

Committee to have power to annex adjoining parishes, &c. to Cities or Boroughs containing fewer than three hundred houses rated at 10*l*.

And be it enacted, that the said last-mentioned committee of the lords of his Majesty's most honourable Privy Council shall, within *three* months after the passing of this act, proceed to annex to such cities and boroughs (except those enumerated in Schedule A.) as now have the privilege of sending members to parliament, but do not contain more than *three hundred* houses, of the yearly value of *ten pounds* at least, or rated to the relief of the poor, or to the duty assessed on inhabited houses at *ten pounds* by the year at least, any parish or township within which the said city or borough or any part thereof may lie, or any parish or township adjoining thereto, or any outlying portions of any other parish or township that may be locally situate within such city or borough, or within such annexed parish or township, parishes or townships, as such committee may deem convenient (for the purposes of election only); and every such city or borough shall, jointly with such annexed parish or township, parishes or townships, be a city or borough for the purpose of electing members, and return such member or members as they may be entitled respectively to return to serve in all future parliaments; and the said last mentioned committee shall make a report of their determination touching the said annexations to his Majesty in council, and it shall be lawful for his Majesty to issue his royal proclamation, making known the said determination and report of the said committee, and the said report shall forthwith be laid before both Houses of Parliament.

Right of voting in Boroughs.

And be it enacted, that in all elections for members to serve in any future parliament for cities and boroughs, every male person of full age, and not subject to any legal incapacity, who shall have occupied for

six months previous to the settlement of the registers which are hereinafter directed to be made, any house within such cities and boroughs of the clear yearly value of *ten pounds*, or bonâ fide subject to the yearly rent of *ten pounds*, or which shall have been for the same time rated to the relief of the poor, or to the duty assessed upon inhabited houses, at a sum not less than *ten pounds*, shall have a right to vote for such cities and boroughs: provided always, that no person who shall not have been duly registered according to the provisions hereinafter contained shall be admitted to vote at such election: provided also, that every person now having a right to vote in virtue of any corporate right, shall retain such right for his life, and on being duly registered shall be entitled to vote, provided every such person shall have resided for *six* months previous to the time of registration hereinafter directed, within *seven* statute miles of the usual place of election within such city or borough; and provided also, that any person now having a right to vote by reason of owning or occupying any tenement, shall retain such right as long as he owns or occupies the same or any other tenement in the same place, by reason of which ownership or occupation he will have a right of voting by the laws or customs now in force, and shall be allowed to vote, if duly registered, as hereinafter directed.

Churchwardens and Overseers to publish Lists of persons entitled to vote in Cities and Boroughs on three Sundays.

And be it enacted, that the churchwardens and overseers of every parish and township, in part or in whole, situate within, or by virtue of this act to be annexed to any city or borough returning or which shall return members to serve in any future parliament (except those named in Schedule A.) shall on or before the in the present year, and on or

before and the in each subsequent year, make out an alphabetical list of every male person residing within such city or borough, or annexed parish or township as the case may be, occupying a house of the clear yearly value of *ten pounds*, or bonâ fide subject to the yearly rent of *ten pounds*, or rated to the relief of the poor, or to the duty on inhabited houses, at a sum of not less than *ten pounds* by the year, and in respect of which all the rents, rates, and taxes shall have been paid up to that time; and another such list, of every male person claiming to vote by virtue of any corporate or burgess or any other right existing in such persons at the time of passing this act, and shall affix such lists to the doors of all churches and chapels in the several townships and parishes situate within the said cities and boroughs respectively, on the three Sundays next after they shall have been made respectively in this and every subsequent year.

Returning Officer to revise Lists.

And be it enacted, that on the Monday next following the last of the said three Sundays in the present year, and on the first Monday in the month of November in each succeeding year, the returning officer of every city or borough shall sit in some convenient public hall or place (having first given three clear days' notice of his sitting, to be affixed on the doors of all the said churches and chapels) for hearing objections to the insertion or omission of names in either of the said lists, and for inquiring into the truth of such objections, and for expunging, retaining, or inserting names according to the best of his judgment.

How to proceed in expunging and retaining names.

And be it enacted, that the said returning officer shall have full power and he is hereby required to retain on the said list all names to which no valid

objection shall be made and proved by evidence, and to insert in such list the name of every male person of full age, not subject to any legal incapacity, who shall appear to have been residing for *six* months at least within such city or borough, or such annexed parish or township, and to have either been in the occupation of such house as aforesaid for *six* months at the least before the Monday on which the said returning officer shall commence his sittings, or to be entitled in some other right, hereby saved, or not hereby affected, to vote at the election of members of parliament to serve for such city or borough; and shall expunge from the said list the name of every person who shall be proved to be a minor under the age of twenty-one years, or incapacitated by any law or statute from voting for members to serve in parliament, and of every person who shall be proved not to have been for the time aforesaid the occupier of such house as aforesaid, or not to have made good the payment of all rates, rents, and taxes, or who shall not prove himself entitled in some other right to vote in the election of members to serve for such city or borough, provided that no person's name shall be expunged without one clear weeks' notice first given to him or left at his residence; and no person's name shall be inserted without three clear weeks' notice to the churchwardens and overseers aforesaid, of his claim to have his name inserted, and without such notice being affixed for the three Sundays preceding the said Monday on the doors of all churches and chapels within the parish wherein such person shall reside.

Churchwardens, &c. to publish Lists of Freeholders, &c. on three Sundays.

And be it enacted, that the churchwardens and overseers of every parish and township shall make an alphabetical list of all persons claiming to be entitled,

by reason of the ownership or possession of any freehold, leasehold, or copyhold, or customary lands or tenements situate within such parish or township, to vote in any election for a knight of the shire to serve for the county wherein such parish or township lies, and shall on or before the in the present year, and on or before the in each succeeding year, cause such list to be affixed on the doors of all the churches and chapels within such parish or township, or if there be no church or chapel, then to be fixed up in some public and conspicuous situation within the same respectively on the first *three* Sundays in the month of September in each year; and on or before the *twenty-fifth day of September* in each year shall send such list to the high constable or high constables of the hundred wherein such parish or township lies, who shall forthwith transmit the same to the clerk of the peace of the county.

Judges of Assizes to name a Barrister who shall revise Lists.

And be it enacted, that the judges named in the last commission of assize for each county, immediately after the *passing of this act*, and in each succeeding year the judges of assize for each county when travelling the summer circuit, shall nominate and appoint (subject, nevertheless, to the approbation of the lord high chancellor, lord keeper, or lords commissioners of the great seal for the time being) a barrister to revise such lists, and decide upon all objections to the omission or insertion of the names therein respectively, and that such barrister so appointed as aforesaid shall give public notice by advertisement in the county newspapers, that he will make a circuit of the county for which he shall be so nominated and appointed, and of the several times and places at which he will hold courts for that purpose, and he shall hold an open

court for that purpose at the times and places so to be announced; and that such barrister shall be paid for discharging the duty so cast upon him, out of the . . at the rate of not more than or less than for every day that he shall be so employed: provided always, that no barrister so nominated and appointed as aforesaid shall be eligible to serve in parliament for twelve months from the time of such his appointment for the county for which he shall be nominated and appointed.

How to proceed in expunging or inserting names.

And be it enacted, that the said barrister shall inquire into and determine all such objections as aforesaid, and shall expunge the names of all persons who shall not have owned or held the lands or tenements in respect of which he claims to vote for the space of *thirty* days at the least before the first day of holding the said court, or who shall be incapacitated by any law or statute from voting in the election of members to serve in parliament, and shall insert the name of any person who may, to the satisfaction of such barrister, prove himself to have owned or held such lands and tenements as may entitle him to a vote in the next ensuing election, and who shall not be proved incapable by law of voting in the election of members to serve in parliament; provided that no name shall be expunged or inserted without such notice and publication as is hereinbefore required in respect to the lists to be made for cities and boroughs.

Lists to be settled and signed in open Court by Returning Officer and Barrister respectively.

And be it enacted, that such returning officer and such barrister so holding their respective courts as aforesaid, shall have power to administer an oath to all persons making objection to the insertion or omission of any name in such list as aforesaid, and to all persons objected against, and to all witnesses who may be

tendered on either side, but that the said hearings shall not be attended by counsel; and that such returning officer or barrister shall, upon the hearing in open court, finally determine upon the validity of such claims and objections, and shall in open court write his initials against the names respectively struck out or inserted, and sign his name to the several lists so settled.

County Lists to be transmitted to Clerk of Peace, Borough Lists to be kept by Returning Officer, and handed to his successor.

And be it enacted, that such lists shall, when so settled and signed, be tacked together and form one list for the county or division, city or borough respectively; and the list so signed by the said barrister shall be transmitted to the clerk of the peace of the county for which he shall have been appointed; and the list so signed by the said returning officer shall be by him kept and handed over at the expiration of his office to the person succeeding him in the same; and that the clerk of the peace and the returning officer respectively shall cause copies of the same to be printed at the expense of the county (which shall be delivered to all persons applying, on payment of *sixpence* for each copy,) and that such lists shall be the lists of electors to vote after the end of this present parliament, in the choice of knights, citizens, and burgesses for the several counties, and division of counties, cities, and boroughs for which such lists shall be made respectively at any election which may be holden after the said day of in the present year, and before the first day of December in the next year, and the lists to be made in each succeeding year shall be the lists of the electors to vote at any election to be holden after the first day of December in each succeeding year respectively.

Such Lists to be the Lists from which Elections shall be made.

No inquiry at time of election, but as to identity of the person, and whether he has voted before at same Election.

And be it enacted, that in all elections whatever of members to serve in any future parliament, no inquiry shall be permitted at the time of polling, except as to whether the person claiming to vote be the same whose name appears in such list, and whether such persons shall have previously voted at the same election, and no such person shall be excluded from voting at any such election, except by reason of his refusing to take the oaths or make the affirmation required by law.

Conduct of Barrister and Returning Officer, and accuracy of Lists to be questionable before Committee of House of Commons,

Provided nevertheless, and be it further enacted, that by petition to the House of Commons, complaining of an undue election or return of any knight, citizen, or burgess, any petitioner shall be at liberty to question the correctness of the lists which shall have been settled by such barrister or returning officer, and to prove that names were improperly retained, inserted, expunged or omitted at the registration that shall have taken place next before the election or return complained of; and the committee before whom the merits of any such petition shall be tried may inquire into the same, and alter the poll taken at such election according to the truth of the case, and direct the return to be amended accordingly; and in case of corruption, partiality, or wilful misconduct, may order such costs to be paid to the petitioner by such barrister or returning officer as such committee shall think reasonable.

who may award costs against them for partiality, &c.

Sheriffs of the divided counties to preside at Elections by themselves or deputies, and fix the time.

And be it enacted, that the sheriffs of the counties directed hereby to be divided, shall fix the several days of election for knights of the shire for the several parts, ridings, and divisions of their said respective counties, and shall preside at the same by themselves or their lawful deputies.

Commencement and continuance of polls at all but County Elections.

And be it enacted, that at all contested elections of members to serve in all future parliaments, except elections for counties and divisions of counties, the poll shall commence on the day of nomination or on the day next following, or at the latest on the *third* day; and that the number of hours during which the polling shall proceed shall on the first day of polling be *seven* and on the second day *eight*, and that the poll shall on no account be kept open later than *four* o'clock in the afternoon of such second day; and the final state of the poll shall be declared not later than *two* o'clock in the afternoon of the *third* day after the poll shall be opened; and the returning officer or officers shall return the member or members to serve in parliament by virtue of such election immediately after the final state of the poll is declared.

Commencement and continuance of polls at County Elections.

And be it enacted, that if on the day of election of a knight to serve in any future parliament for any county or division more candidates shall be proposed for the choice of the electors than the number of vacancies to be filled up, and a poll shall be demanded, the polling shall commence at *nine* o'clock in the forenoon of the next day but one after the day of election, in the several places to be appointed as hereinafter directed by the magistrates for taking polls; and the final state of the poll shall be declared at noon of the *sixth* day after the said day of election.

Polling places to be appointed by Justices in Sessions.

And be it enacted, that the justices of the peace for each county assembled at the general quarter sessions to be holden next after the *passing of this act*, and after such royal proclamations as hereinbefore mentioned, making known the divisions and incorporations of the said counties for which, after the *passing of this act*, knights of the shire shall be elected, to serve in all

future parliaments, or at some special sessions to be by them appointed, and of which at least there shall be given *ten* days public notice, shall consider and shall have full power to appoint convenient places within such counties and divisions for taking the poll at all future elections of knights of the shire to serve in parliament for the said counties and divisions respectively, in such manner that no person shall have to travel more than *fifteen* miles from the property in respect of which he claims to vote; provided that no county or division of a county now entitled or by this act empowered to send knights of the shire to serve in parliament shall have more than *fifteen* places appointed for taking the poll for the same respectively.

Justices to have power to alter at the end of two years.

And be it enacted, that the said justices of the peace shall have the like authority to appoint different places, at the end of *two* years from the first appointment to be made for that purpose, and that a list of the polling places to be so appointed shall be lodged with the clerk of the peace of each county; and that the names of such places so appointed shall be inserted on lists to be affixed on the door of the churches and chapels within each county and division immediately after they are so made according to the last appointment, and the polling at election shall take place according to the list last lodged, in conformity to this enactment, with the said clerk of the peace.

Election for Boroughs to be held in one place, at several booths, not more than 600 voting at one booth.

And be it enacted, that every election of members to serve in all future parliaments for all cities and boroughs in England shall be held, carried on and concluded in some one place, and under the superintendence and control of the same returning officer or officers; but there shall be appointed for taking the poll at such election different booths for different parishes, districts

or places, so divided and allotted as to the returning officer or officers shall seem most convenient, of which division and allotment public notice shall be given, so that no greater number than *six hundred* shall be required to poll at any one booth.

Candidates to be at the expense of Books and Poll Clerks, or

And be it enacted, that, after the end of this present parliament, all booths to be built for the convenience of taking polls shall be erected by contract with the candidates, or if they cannot agree, such booths shall be erected by the sheriff or other returning officer or officers at the joint and equal expense of the several candidates; and that the clerks employed in taking the poll shall be paid *one guinea* by the day by each of the candidates at such election: provided always, that if any person shall be proposed without his consent, then the person so proposing him shall be liable to defray his share of the said expenses in like manner as if he had been a candidate.

persons proposing Candidate without his consent.

Poll to be kept open seven hours on the first day, eight the second, and to close at four on the second day.

And be it enacted, that the number of hours during which the poll for any county or division, shall be taken on the first day shall be *seven*, and on the second day shall be *eight:* and that no poll shall be kept open later than *four* o'clock in the afternoon of the *second* day.

Poll books to be sealed at the close of each day, and handed to the Returning Officer, who shall add up and declare the numbers in open court, and make return of Member elected by majority.

And be it enacted, that the poll-clerks, at the close of each day's poll of an election for any county or division, shall enclose and seal their several books, and shall in open court deliver them so sealed to the sheriff or to his deputy presiding at such poll, who shall give a receipt for the same; and the sheriff or his deputy who so receives, shall, on the commencement of the poll on the second day, deliver them back so enclosed and sealed to the person from whom he shall have received them; and on the final close of the poll, the said sheriff or such his deputy shall keep the said poll-

books so unopened until the re-assembling of the court on the *sixth* day, when he shall openly break the seals thereon and cast up the number of votes as they appear on the said several books, and shall openly declare the state of the poll or polls, and shall make proclamation of the member or members chosen.

Repealing the Act requiring names of Freeholders to be placed on Land-tax Roll.

And be it enacted, that so much of an act passed in the twentieth year of the reign of King George the Third, intituled, 'An act to remove certain difficulties relative to voters at county elections,' as requires the names of freeholders to be placed on the land-tax roll, shall be and the same is hereby repealed; and all laws, statutes and usages now in force respecting the election of members to serve in parliament for that part of the United Kingdom called England and Wales, shall be and remain and are hereby declared to be and remain in full force, except so far as they are repealed or altered by this act.

Penalties on Officers for breach of duty

And be it enacted, that if any sheriff, returning officer, barrister, or any person whatsoever, shall wilfully contravene or disobey the provisions of this act or any of them, with respect to any matter or thing which such sheriff, returning officer, barrister, or other person is hereby required to do, he shall for such his offence be liable to be sued in an action of debt in any of his majesty's courts of record at Westminster for the penal sum of and the jury before whom such action shall be tried may find their verdict for the full sum of or for any less sum not less than which the said jury shall think it just that he should pay for such his offence; and the defendant in such action, being convicted, shall pay such penal sum so awarded, with full costs of suit, to any party who may sue for the same, without prejudice however to the right

of any party grieved by the same misconduct of such sheriff, returning officer, barrister, or other person, to recover such damages in an action on the case for a false return, or any other grievance, as he may be entitled to at common law or by virtue of any statute now in force.

Persons disqualified voting, subject to all penalties now existing, and liable to costs on Petition to House of Commons.

And be it enacted, that if any person named in any of the lists so as aforesaid required to be made, but who at the time of any election shall be in the enjoyment of any office now by law disqualifying him from giving his vote at the election of members to serve in parliament, shall presume to vote at such election, he shall be liable to all penalties and forfeitures to which he would have been subject for the said offence by any law in force at the time of the passing of this act, anything herein contained notwithstanding; and in case of a petition to the House of Commons, for altering the return or setting aside the election in which such person shall have voted, his vote shall be struck off by the committee, with such costs to be by him paid to any petitioner as to such committee shall seem just.

Act not to extend to Universities of Oxford and Cambridge.

And be it enacted and provided, that nothing in this act contained shall extend to or in any wise affect the election for members to serve in parliament for the Universities of Oxford or Cambridge.

Of the sense in which words are to be understood.

And be it enacted, that throughout this act wherever the words 'city or borough,' 'cities or boroughs' may occur, those words shall extend to and include all towns corporate, cinque ports, districts or places within England and Wales which shall be entitled, after this act shall have passed, to return members to serve in parliament, other than counties and divisions of counties, and also to the town of Berwick-upon-Tweed; and the words 'returning officer' shall apply

to every person or persons who by virtue of his or their office, either under the present act or under any former law, custom or statute, has or have had and shall have the right of returning writs or precepts for the election of members to serve in parliament, by whatever name such person or persons may have been called; and the words 'parish or township' shall extend to every parish, township, vill, hamlet, district or place, maintaining its own poor; and the words 'churchwardens and overseers of the poor' shall extend to all overseers of the poor in the several parishes, townships, or chapelries, vills, districts or places, by whatever name or title they may be called, and whether appointed under the act for the relief of the poor passed in the forty-third year of her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, or under any local act, or according to any peculiar custom, or in any other manner whatever.

SCHEDULES TO WHICH THIS ACT REFERS.

SCHEDULE (A.)

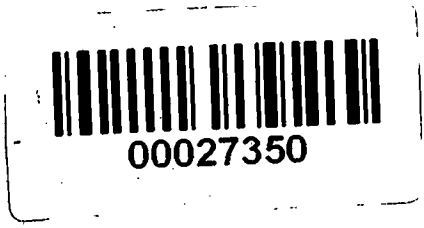
Boroughs.	County.	Boroughs.	County.
Aldborough . .	York.	Malmesbury . . .	Wilts.
Aldeburgh	Suffolk.	Midhurst	Sussex.
Appleby	Westmoreland.	Milborne Port . .	Somersetshire.
Bedwin (Great) .	Wilts.	Minehead	ditto.
Berealston	Devonshire.	Newport	Cornwall.
Bishop's Castle. .	Salop.	Newton	Lancashire.
Blechingley . . .	Surrey.	Newtown (Hants)	Isle of Wight.
Boroughbridge. .	Yorkshire.	Okehampton . . .	Devonshire.
Bossiney	Cornwall.	Orford	Suffolk.
Brackley	Northampton.	Petersfield	Hants.
Bramber	Sussex.	Plympton	Devonshire.
Buckingham . . .	Buckinghamshire.	Queenborough . .	Kent.
		Reigate	Surrey.
Callington	Cornwall.	Romney (New) .	Kent.
Camelford	ditto.	St. Mawe's	Cornwall.
Castle Rising . .	Norfolk.	St. Michael's or Midshall . . .	ditto.
Corfe Castle . . .	Dorsetshire.		
Dunwich	Suffolk.	Saltash	ditto.
Eye.	ditto.	Old Sarum	Wilts.
Fowey	Cornwall.	Seaford	Sussex.
Gatton	Surrey.	Steyning	ditto.
Haslemere	ditto.	Stockbridge . . .	Hants.
Hedon	York.	Tregony	Cornwall.
Heytesbury . . .	Wilts.	Wareham	Dorsetshire.
Higham Ferrers .	Northampton.	Wendover	Bucks.
Hindon	Wilts.	Weobly	Herefordshire.
Ilchester	Somersetshire.	Whitchurch . . .	Hants.
East Looe	Cornwall.	Winchelsea . . .	Sussex.
West Looe	ditto.	Woodstock	Oxfordshire.
Lostwithiel. . . .	ditto.	Wootton Bassett.	Wilts.
Ludgershall . . .	Wilts.	Yarmouth	Isle of Wight, Hants.

SCHEDULE (B.)

Boroughs.	County.	Boroughs.	County.
Amersham . .	Bucks.	Lymington	Hants.
Arundel	Sussex.	Maldon	Essex.
Ashburton	Devon.	Marlborough . . .	Wilts.
Bodmin	Cornwall.	Marlow (Great) .	Bucks.
Bridport	Dorsetshire.	Morpeth	Northumberland.
Chippenham . . .	Wiltshire.		
Clitheroe	Lancashire.	Northallerton . .	York.
Cockermouth . .	Cumberland.	Penryn	Cornwall.
Dorchester	Dorsetshire.	Richmond	York.
Downton	Wiltshire.	Rye	Sussex.
Droitwich	Worcestershire.	St. Germain's . .	Cornwall.
Evesham	ditto.	St. Ives	ditto.
Grimsby (Great).	Lincolnshire.	Sandwich	Kent.
Grinstead (East).	Sussex.	Shaftesbury . . .	Dorsetshire.
Guildford	Surrey.	Sudbury	Suffolk.
Helston	Cornwall.	Tamworth	Staffordshire & Warwick.
Honiton	Devonshire.	Thetford	Norfolk.
Huntingdon . . .	Huntingdonshire.	Thirsk	York
Hythe	Kent.	Totness	Devonshire.
Launceston. . . .	Cornwall.	Truro	Cornwall.
Leominster. . . .	Herefordshire.	Wallingford . . .	Berkshire.
Liskeard	Cornwall.	Westbury	Wilts.
Lyme Regis . . .	Dorsetshire.	Wilton	ditto.
		Wycombe	Bucks

SCHEDULE (C.)

Places.	Parish or Township.	Returning Officer.
Manchester . . .	Township of Manchester, Township of Salford, Townships of— Chorlton Row, Ardwicke, Beswick, Hulme, Cheetham, and Pendleton, Lancashire.	The Boroughreeve of Manchester.
Birmingham . . .	Parishes of— St. Philip and St. Mary, in Birmingham; Aston, Warwickshire.	The two Bailiffs of the town of Birmingham.
Leeds	The Borough and Liberty of Leeds, Yorkshire.	The Mayor of Leeds.
Halifax	Parish of Halifax, Yorkshire.	
Greenwich	Parishes of— Greenwich; St. Nicholas and St. Paul, Deptford; Woolwich, Kent.	
Sheffield	Townships of— Sheffield, Ecclesall, Brightside, Nether Hallam, Upper Hallam, Attercliffe, Yorkshire.	The Master Cutler.
Sunderland . . .	Parishes of— Sunderland, Bishopwearmouth, and Monkswearmouth, Durham.	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